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THE

POLITICAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

LEWIS XVI.

WITH

OBSERVATIONS ON EACH LETTER,

BY

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

VOL. II.

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CORRESPONDENCE

OF

LEWIS XVI.

LETTRE XXIX.

Au pape Pie VI.

18 Mai, 1790.

TRÈS-SAINT-PÈRE,

CE n'étoit pas assez que la discorde promenât ses fureurs dans mon royaume : aux querelles politiques vont se joindre les querelles religieuses. Je ne sais quel esprit infernal veut soumettre la religion aux principes des novateurs, à des idées bizarres,

à des réformes singulières. On agite maintenant, dans l'assemblée, les questions les plus absurdes : on diroit que les disciples de Jansénius et de Molina sont sur les bancs, et qu'ils se déclarent pour ou contre des opinions ultramontaines. On présente une constitution civile pour le clergé français : elle le rendroit indépendant du Saint-Siége ; elle accorderoit l'élection au peuple ; elle renverseroit l'antique hiérarchie de l'église gallicane : et pour donner à cette constitution civile du clergé, des prosélytes nombreux ; pour éloigner les ministres fidèles, on veut exiger un serment, Très-Saint-Père ; ce serment fera naître un schisme dans l'église.

Je ne sais quel pressentiment me pénètre d'effroi ; je vois la religion avilie, ses ministres persécutés, le loup dans la bergerie. J'ai voulu vous instruire, le premier, de cette résolution des états-généraux ; du projet de quelques têtes ardentes, de quel-

ques gens profondément pervers, et déjà très-habiles dans l'art de révolutionner. J'aurai besoin de vos conseils, et ne ferai rien sans vous consulter. Je vous fais remettre, par M. de M . . . . . n, un exemplaire de cette constitution. . . . examinez : vos sages avis me guideront; mais déjà la voix de ma conscience me crie, que je ne dois pas sanctionner cette œuvre des ténèbres.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXIX.

To pope Pius the sixth.

May 18th, 1790.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

IT was not enough, that discord let loose its furies throughout my kingdom; religious quarrels are about to be added to political disputes. I know not what infernal spirit would subject religion to the principles of the innovators, to wild ideas, and strange reforms. Questions the most absurd are agitated in the assembly, and one might imagine that the disciples of Jansenius and Molina were on the bench, attacking or defending ultramontane opinions.

A civil constitution has been presented for the clergy, which would render them independent of the holy see, would confer the right of election on the people, overturn the ancient hierarchy of the Gallican church; and in order to gain numerous proselytes to this civil constitution of the clergy, and remove faithful ministers, it is proposed to require an oath. This oath, most holy father, will give birth to a schism in the church. I know not what presages fill my mind with terror, but I see religion vilified, its ministers persecuted, the wolf in the sheep fold. I wished to be the first to inform you of this resolution of the states-general, the project of some heated brains, of a few men profoundly wicked, and already well versed in the art of revolutionising. I shall stand in need of your counsels, and will do nothing without consulting you. I send you, by M. de M.....n, a copy of this constitution; examine it: your sage advice shall be my guide; but already

the voice of my conscience cries loudly that I ought not to sanction this work of darkness.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE TWENTY-NINTH LETTER.

Among the various changes which have been produced by the revolution, no part of the old establishments, excepting the monarchy itself, has undergone a more singular destiny than the religion of the state. Whenever this subject, which had been so freely canvassed by modern writers, became a matter of legislative discussion, the same sceptical spirit which had discovered so much

irreverential demur respecting rights and privileges, in the affairs of this world, did not hesitate to carry the eye of profane scrutiny into those of the next. The enemies of the altar, the name given to the philosophic division of the assembly, had proceeded with great dexterity in the seizure of the outworks, by the decrees of the fourth of August, and by the declaration that the domains of the church were the property of the nation. As soon as this formidable line of defence, which was the great bulwark of the citadel, had been demolished, an attack was made on the fortress itself.

The clergy had not been inactive in their opposition to the first act of hostility; but when they found that resistance was hopeless, they endeavoured to capitulate, by requiring from the assembly a formal decree, that the catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion, should be declared the religion of

the state. This question was eluded at the time by the observation, that this fundamental truth was to form an article of the constitution, and the discussion was adjourned. From that period, the press of other important matter had prevented the renewal of this proposition; when in the month of February following, the discussion took place respecting the abolition of the monastic orders. As further depredations were about to be committed on the property of the church, the clergy again brought forward this term of compromise; but after a long and animated debate, the religion of the state was, on the same pretence as the former, a second time adjourned.

Hopes were nevertheless entertained, that this declaration would take place whenever the order of business in the assembly should present the favorable moment. The establishment of a commission two months after for what was then called by the clergy

stripping the church of its patrimony, was thought a fit occasion to lead the assembly to the recollection of this subject. The motion was this time made by a priest, Dom. Gerle, who voted in general with the majority, but who in the present instance, vying in zeal with his colleagues of the *côté droit*, proposed that this religion was, and should always remain, the religion of the nation, and that its worship should be the only one authorised.

Although the clergy had made no preparations for a solemn debate, yet as the question was now brought forward, it was judged expedient to give it support, and efforts were made to prove the necessity of coming to a fair and open declaration without any further discussion or adjournment. It was now, for the first time, that doubts respecting the fundamental truth of a state religion began to discover themselves in the assembly, to the great astonishment and

scandal of the clergy, who did not, or at least pretended not to expect that such motives of objection could ever have existed. This debate was not lengthened on the day the question was introduced; but when it was resumed the day following, the assembly felt the necessity of coming to a decision to set it finally at rest, which took place on a previous motion of the Duke of Rochefaucault,* stating, after various conside-

* The motion of the duke of Rochefaucault was conceived in the following terms. "The national assembly, considering that it neither has, nor can have any authority over consciences or religious opinions; that the majesty of religion, and the profound respect which is its due, forbid that it should become a subject of deliberation; considering that the attachment of the national assembly to the worship of the roman catholic and apostolic religion cannot be called in doubt at the moment when this worship exclusively is going to be placed in the first class of public expenditure, and when by an unanimous sentiment of respect the assembly has expressed its sentiments in the only manner which could suit the

rations, that the assembly neither could nor ought to deliberate respecting the question proposed, and that it should pass to the order of the day, which was the disposal of the ecclesiastical domains. As this motion was understood and felt by each party to be the final arrangement of the question, it was opposed by the clergy and their friends with all the zeal and energy that its importance required. A formal remonstrance from part of the body followed the decision. This opposition in favor of the religion of the state was so much the more disinterested on the part of the clergy, as the faith for which they contended was already stript of its richest endowments; but accustomed, from a mistake natural to their order, to consider the state as part of the

dignity of religion, and the character of the national legislature, decrees, that it neither can nor ought to deliberate on the question proposed, and passes to the order of the day, concerning the ecclesiastical domains."

church, they mourned the departing majesty of the latter, as much as they regretted its alienated wealth.

But the clergy, in its legislative capacity, was not the only division of public authority hostile to this spirit of religious innovation. Towards the throne, their natural ally, the higher orders of the priesthood had cast their imploring looks, nor was the appeal against this laical interposition made in vain. The king, it must be observed, through the whole of this correspondence discovers a disposition for piety, and a great sensibility to religious impressions. He accuses himself, in one of his letters, of a momentary aberration from the faith, seduced by the writings of the philosophers; but, like Polemon, he only travelled through error, and made no sojourn. Turgot and Malesherbes, whatever influence they had over his mind in other concerns, found him here firm and unshaken; whoever

contemplates this part of the character of Lewis the sixteenth cannot but pay him the homage he deserves; that amidst the seduction of philosophical scepticism on the one hand, and the licentiousness of a dissolute court on the other, he appears to have retained a deep sense of the importance of religion, and was in his own person an example of unaffected piety.

But piety is no guarantee against mistakes of opinion. The king, though he sometimes distinguished between the clergy and the church, as appears from the marginal notes he made occasionally on their remonstrances, had not carried his principles of research to their legitimate consequences, and made the due distinction between the church and christianity.

We find him in this letter to the pope departing from his usual moderation, and stigmatising the spirit of inquiry which had

but it appears, from the solemnity with which the king introduces the subject, that it is a crime of no small magnitude, since it not only fills him with undescribable terror, but he sees in mental perspective religion degraded, and the wolf stalking through the sheepfold. Under such alarm and perturbation, he appeals, like the true, as he was the first, son of the church, from the voice of his country to the chief of the faithful. He invokes the aid of his paternal counsels against those who, profoundly perverse and dextrous in the art of revolutionising, mislead the states-general. He promises to be swayed by the determinations of the holy see; but declares, at the same time, that the cry of his conscience has already decided him to withhold his sanction from this work of darkness.

Had this been the determination of a simple individual, we might have applauded his sincerity while we pitied his blindness; but when we consider it as the dispatch of "the restorer

of French liberty," the first magistrate of a free country, to a foreign potentate remarkable at no time for any overweaning attachment to either the natural, civil, or religious rights of mankind, whatever respect we may feel for the piety of the prince, we can entertain but slender ideas of the strength of intellect or judgment of the man. The conscience of a king is, no doubt, a thing of delicate texture; but the history of our own times teaches us that it is by no means an infallible criterion of wisdom in the science of government.

It appears also from this letter, that it was the cry of the king's conscience which first awoke that of the pope, whilst it has been generally believed that it was the conscience of the pope which first roused that of the king. Ill fated prince! unfortunate pontiff! in times of ignorance and darkness ye might, by the display of your private virtues, have obtained the approbation of mankind; but it was your

lot to appear at a moment when lights superior to your own beamed from every point of the mental horizon. Ye have been eclipsed, and for ever. Let us believe that your errors formed a link in the chain of the vast designs of providence; ye have acted the part which ye were destined to act, and have disappeared from the scene. If the influence of principles contrary to your own forbid us to strew flowers, let not the pride of philosophy, or the austerity of freedom, check the sigh we breathe over the tomb of the unhappy.

LETTRE XXX.

A M. de Rivarol.

28 Mai, 1790.

Le plan que vous m'avez remis, monsieur, est un chef-d'œuvre de politique et de philosophie, qui auroit fait honneur aux Mably et aux Condillac; mais tout en rendant justice à votre manière de juger certains hommes, influencés dans le moment actuel, il y auroit trop de témérité à employer les moyens que vous m'indiquez. L'exemple que vous me citez, du roi de Suède, est tout différent de la position où je me trouve; ce prince avoit, pour se faire obéir, des soldats sur lesquels il pouvoit compter, et des amis courageux; il n'avoit à lutter que contre quelques factieux : ici la contagion révo-

lutionnaire est devenue une maladie épidémique, qu'on ne peut guérir, qu'en prouvant au peuple qu'il est la dupe de ceux qui lui promettent les chimères de l'âge d'or. Vous pouvez atteindre le but désirable, monsieur, en faisant disparoître, de votre plan, tout ce qui pourroit irriter les audacieux : enfin, soyez à la mesure des circonstances.

Vous connoissez, monsieur, les sentimens particuliers que j'ai pour vous.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXX.

To M. de Rivarol.

May 28th, 1790.

THE plan you have sent me, Sir, is a master-piece of politics and philosophy, which would do honor to the Mablys and the Condillacs. But while I render justice to your manner of judging certain men of influence in the present circumstances, there would be too much temerity in employing the means you point out. The example which you cite of the king of Sweden is altogether different from the position in which I am placed. That prince could make himself obeyed by means of soldiers, of whom he was sure, and of

friends, in whose courage he could confide, and had only to struggle against a few factious men. Here the revolutionary contagion is become an epidemical malady, which can only be cured by convincing the people, that they are the dupes of those who promise them the chimeras of the golden age. You may accomplish this end, Sir, by effacing from your plan whatever may irritate the daring, and by accommodating your ideas to the state of my circumstances.

You know, Sir, my particular sentiments for you.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTIETH LETTER.

Among the evils which beset Lewis the sixteenth, none were more mischievous than certain classes of counsellors who buzzed around the court, occupied in fabricating plans of counter-revolution, which tended to agitate the king's mind, and prevent his adherence to the principles which in his speeches and proclamations he avowed to the assembly and the world. Of this description was M. Rivarol, a man of showy talent, and from the confidence he had in his own opinions, not unfitted to hold a considerable rank among those enterprising spirits, who, according to a former project of the king, were worthy of being enlisted in the royal service.

We are altogether ignorant of this plan of M. Rivarol's, which the king condescends to inform him is a *chef-d'œuvre*, that would have done honor to Mably and Condillac. It is impossible to convey a higher opinion of M. Rivarol's political and philosophical attainments than is contained in this eulogium, and we have only to lament the modesty of the writer, who in this single instance has sacrificed his ruling passion to his loyalty. It was not from M. Rivarol that we should have expected this literary reserve. But though we are left in ignorance respecting the plan, the objection made by the king to the mode of execution, leads us to the knowledge of its nature and tendency. M. Rivarol had read or probably seen with what dexterity the king of Sweden crushed an overbearing aristocracy, and had drawn a conclusion with respect to France diametrically opposite to what a politician, worthy of being the rival of Mably and Condillac, would have drawn. It is on this ma-

terial point that the king, approving highly of the plan, deigns to make his objections. He informs M. Rivarol, that he had neither soldiers to obey, nor courageous friends to assist him; that the revolutionary contagion was become an epidemical disease, which it was impossible to cure but by convincing the people that they were the dupes of impostors, who promised them the return of the golden age.

What appears extraordinary in this letter, is not that M. Rivarol should present plans of counter-revolution, or that the king, knowing their fallacy, should reject them; but that he should commit himself so unguardedly to an empirist, who, had he found it his interest, would have made no scruple of betraying his confidence. It was at this epocha that the king issued a proclamation, in which he spoke with indignation of the maneuvres of persons who were active in exciting vain alarms, either by false inter-

pretations of decrees, and throwing doubts on his intentions, as ill founded as they were injurious, or in concealing private interest under the cloak of religion." The assembly and the people of Paris were thrown into ecstasy at this new demonstration of the king's devotedness to the revolution. At that very moment his letter to the Pope was on its way to Rome, and Rivarol was applauded for his plan of counter-revolution, which was discarded only because it was impracticable.

LETTRE XXXI.

A M. le duc d'Orléans.

5 Juin, 1790.

MON COUSIN,

MADAME la duchesse d'Orléans demande votre retour en France; je répondrai aux instances de la vertu, en lui accordant ce qu'elle désire. On croit cependant que votre retour seroit funeste à la tranquillité publique. On va jusqu'à vous supposer des vues ambitieuses..... venez apprendre de votre roi comme il faut être français, et comment on est digne d'être du sang de celui qui les gouverne.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXI.

To the duke of Orleans.

June 3d, 1790.

My cousin,

The duchess of Orleans desires your return to France, and I will yield to the intreaties of virtue by granting what she asks. It is believed, however, that your return would be fatal to public tranquillity -- it is even supposed that you have ambitious views. -- Come and learn of your king what a Frenchmen ought to be, and how you may become worthy of the blood of him who governs them.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-FIRST LETTER.

THERE is an appearance of dignity in this letter to the duke of Orleans, whose absence from France was enjoined after the affairs of the fifth and sixth of October. The king hints his apprehensions that the return of the duke might be fatal to public tranquillity; the observation and counsel which follow, contain more than hints; and the breaks in the letter must have given his cousin the measure of the king's sentiments concerning him.

The faction of the duke of Orleans has been much talked of in Europe. That he was sometimes the instrument of certain leaders of the popular party admits of no

doubt, but his personal ambition was always rebuked by his incapacity; he never arrived at the dignity of a chief. The king, however, appears to have had a contrary conviction, and the virtue of the duchess of Orleans was not a sufficient motive to betray him into the weakness of permitting the Duke's return, had he had the power of preventing it.

It appears to have been in consequence of this permission, that M. d'Orleans, three weeks from the date of this letter, wrote to the king, signifying his acceptance. This answer he relates in a letter to the assembly, written a fortnight after, in which he informs his colleagues, that whilst he was preparing for his departure, he received intimations from an *aide-de-camp* of M. de La Fayette to defer his journey, in the fear that ill intentioned people might make use of his name to cause further disturbances. The Duke wishes to know who are those ill intentioned people, and declares his purpose of

resuming his seat in the assembly, unless he receives from the legislature an injuction to the contrary.

In the observations made by M. de La Fayette on the letter of the duke of Orleans to the assembly, he says, "After what passed between the duke of Orleans and me, in the month of October, and which I should not have mentioned, had he not thought fit to bring it before the assembly, I deemed it my duty to inform him, that the same reasons which had determined him to accept his mission might still subsist." It seems from this intimation given to M. d'Orleans by M. de La Fayette, that certain circumstances had occurred, or that certain reflections had risen in the interval of the king's letter and the duke's departure from London, which caused this further absence from Paris to be judged expedient. The object of this pretended mission to London was now sufficiently clear and explicit. The duke

thought it prudent to yield at the time, but the party to which he was supposed to belong, having gained further ascendancy, grew indifferent to M. de La Fayette's suggestions; M. d'Orleans returned to Paris according to the king's permission, without any dispositions, as the event proved, of availing himself of the counsel in the sense in which it was offered, of learning from the king how to be a Frenchman, and worthy of the blood of him who governed them.

LETTRE XXXII.

Au pape Pie VI.

2 Juillet, 1790.

TRÈS-SAINT-PÈRE,

J'ai vu les docteurs que vous avez choisis, et j'ai consulté des théologiens estimables. On a dû vous rendre compte des conférences qui ont eu lieu, pendant quelques jours; il n'est qu'une seule voix; et qu'un même avis. On ne peut sanctionner des décrets contraires aux usages antiques de l'église universelle, qui attaquent directement des dogmes sacrés, établissent parmi les évêques, et le corps des pasteurs, une hiérarchie nouvelle, et contrarient la discipline de l'église gallicane Dans la grande querelle qui divise le clergé de France, une

grande partie des Français sont déclarés pour les prêtres dociles aux nouvelles lois ecclésiastiques émanées de l'assemblée constituante. Mais l'opposition à ces lois nouvelles compte pour ses apologistes et ses défenseurs, les théologiens les plus éclairés, les docteurs les plus célèbres, la très-grande majorité, pour ne pas dire l'universalité des évêques de l'église gallicane, et tous les gens de bien attachés au culte de nos pères et à l'ancienne tradition. Si je refuse de sanctionner la constitution civile du clergé, il s'élève une cruelle persécution; j'augmente le nombre des ennemis du trône et de l'autel; je fournis un prétexte à la révolte; je double les maux de la France. Si j'accorde ma sanction, quel scandale dans l'église! je livre à nos ennemis communs l'héritage du Christ: je punis de leur zèle, de leur fidélité, de leur attachement les ministres du Seigneur qui ont respecté l'Arche sainte; j'écarte le bon pasteur, et j'introduis les loups dans la bergerie. Oh!

qui daignera me guider et m'indiquer le parti que je dois suivre! Très-Saint-Père, c'est en vous seul que j'ai mis mon espoir; l'église gallicane réclame toute votre sollicitude, et le petit-fils de Saint-Louis, soumis au légitime successeur de Saint-Pierre, vous demande non-seulement des conseils, mais des ordres spirituels qu'il s'empressera de faire exécuter. Cependant, si les considérations humaines pouvoient être de quelque poids; si l'état actuel de la France pouvoit obtenir quelque indulgence; si dans les affaires du ciel on pouvoit consulter celles de la terre, ne conviendroit-il pas que je prisse le parti de temporiser? Le peuple Français, toujours épris des nouveautés, oublie bientôt ce qui fut l'objet de son enthousiasme; l'idole qu'il élève fut souvent renversé le même jour. Le temps, l'expérience, le conseil des hommes sages, le ciel même qui punit la France de nos erreurs communes, de mes propres fautes, et qui peut se laisser fléchir, rameneront ce bon

peuple, un instant égaré, au giron de l'église, à ses usages antiques, à ses vrais pasteurs. Mais le temps presse, l'esprit impur a soufflé; très-Saint-Père, soyez l'interprète du ciel. Hâtez-vous de prononcer; soyez l'ange de lumière qui dissipe les ténèbres. J'attends avec impatience votre décision, et cette bulle que le clergé de France sollicite, que les évêques réclament, et que vous demande le fils aîné de l'église, toujours fidèle au Saint-Siège.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXII.

To pope Pius the sixth.

July 2d, 1790.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

I have seen the doctors of whom you made choice, and have consulted some estimable theologians. The conferences have been made known to you, which took place during some days, and in which there was but one voice, and one opinion. It is impossible to sanction decrees, which are contrary to the ancient usages of the universal church, which attack directly its holy dogmas, establish among the bishops and the body of the clergy a new hierarchy, and

which are hostile to the discipline of the Gallican church. In the great quarrel which has divided the clergy of France, a considerable part of the French have declared themselves for the priests who are docile to the new ecclesiastical laws, formed by the constituent assembly. But in opposition to those new laws, we find the names of the most enlightened theologians, the most celebrated doctors, and the great majority, if not the universality, of the bishops of the Gallican church, and all men of worth attached to the religion of our fathers, and ancient tradition. If I should refuse to sanction the civil constitution of the clergy, a cruel persecution will arise; I shall augment the number of the enemies of the throne and altar, furnish a pretext for revolt, and double the calamities of France. If I grant my sanction, what a scandal in the church! I yield to our common enemies the inheritance of Christ, I punish the ministers of the Lord, who have

respected the ark of the covenant, for their zeal, fidelity, and attachment; I drive away the good pastors, and introduce the wolves into the sheepfold. Ah! who will be my guide, and point out to me the path which I ought to follow? Most holy father! in you I have placed my hope; the Gallican church calls for all your solicitude, and the descendant of St. Louis, submissive to the legal successor of St. Peter, demands not only your counsels, but your spiritual orders, which he will hasten to put into execution. If, however, human considerations should be of any weight, if the actual situation of France were susceptible of indulgence, if in the affairs of heaven it were permitted to consult those of earth, would it not be proper for me to temporise? The french people ever allured by novelties, soon forget the object of their enthusiasm, and the idol they erect is often in the same day overthrown. Time, experience, the counsels of prudent men,

heaven itself, which punishes France for our common errors, for my personal faults, will perhaps be appeased, and will bring back to their ancient usages, and their true pastors this good people, who have for a moment gone astray. But time presses, the impure spirit has breathed; most holy father, be the interpreter of heaven! Hasten and pronounce! Be the angel of light, that dispels the darkness. I wait with impatience your decision, and that bull which the clergy of France solicit, which the bishops claim, and which is required of you by the son of the church, constantly faithful to the holy see.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-SECOND LETTER.

It was scarcely to have been expected that the clergy, who had held so uncontroled and undisputed a dominion over the minds and consciences of men; who for ages had been habituated to consider themselves the constituted authorities of heaven, to regulate the concerns of earth, and who, proud of their celestial origin, looked down with conscious superiority, not only on the common herd of mankind, but also on those whose dignity, unlike their own, was merely human; it was scarcely to be expected, that this first order of the state, enthroned in all the dignity and splendor of what the orator calls the "Majesty of the Church," would ever

tional assembly, and foreseeing at an early period the perverseness they had to oppose, and the innovations they had to combat, had already made their appeal to the court of Rome, and entered into an alliance offensive and defensive with the holy see, not less a sufferer than themselves in this profane warfare against the church. But the simple interposition of this spiritual chief would have been of little avail: the weapons of his celestial armory had grown rusty by disuse; the display of its mimic thunder on the present occasion would have served to encourage rather than dismay; and its harmless corruscations might have spirited children, as yet only indocile and refractory, into rebellious Titans, menacing the sanctuary of heaven. The papal fulmination, had it been hurled thus unseasonably, might have been answered by the establishment of Protestantism in France; as the menaces of the coalition of kings against its political existence at a later period, was answered by that of a Republic.

The court of Rome saw the danger, and prudently forbore the display of its authority at a moment when the elevation of the public mind was such that its authority would have been overlooked and despised. But to do nothing was equally dangerous. While, therefore, the assembly was active in reforming, the clergy were no less active in recruiting, and a formidable phalanx was raised and disciplined against this irruption of research and philosophy. The spiritual chief of these troops of the church militant was no doubt the holy father himself; but a temporal leader was also indispensable; and this post of honor and of danger was confided to its first son, the king of the French, who had already given indisputable evidence that he was worthy of this sacred trust. When the clergy at the beginning of the revolution made a voluntary surrender of their privileges, the king, in his letter *

* Vide the 20th letter of this collection.

to the archbishop of Arles, declared that he would never clothe this decree with his sanction; and in his first letter* to the pope on the civil constitution of the clergy, he acquaints the holy father, that the cry of his conscience forbade him to sanction that work of darkness.

This alliance between the discontented clergy in France and the pope, obtained, therefore, a zealous auxiliary in the person of Lewis the sixteenth. An objection to what has been stated respecting the moral rectitude of the king may here occur; and it may be demanded, how it was possible for him to reconcile his repeated declarations to the French nation, congratulating them on the acquisition of their liberties, of which he accepted the title of restorer, and those private negociations with its most determined foes, bent on undermining and destroying

* Vide the 25th letter of this collection.

the revolution itself. No apology can, indeed, be made for want of moral rectitude, and we may doubt of the sacredness of any religion which can temporise with fraud and sanctify deceit. Far distant be the idea that a religion, which is still professed by so large a portion of the human race, inculates a doctrine which loosens at once every tie of the social world; yet we may be permitted to lament, that any circumstances should exist in which its corruptions should have so much obscured its morality, that the first principles of moral conduct, even the cry of conscience, should become entangled in its snares, or bend before its machinations.

Nor let this reflection be deemed irrelevant. If we may be allowed to breathe a wish in favor of a purer faith, to foster the hope that a religion of divine origin may one day appear in its native and genuine character, shrinking from all alliances that contaminate its nature,

and spurning at those combinations of policy which would make it the instrument of temporal power, it is in looking back through the troublous vista of the revolution to the period when this letter was written, and in contrasting the private correspondent of the pope with the first magistrate of a free people. This letter had been only twelve days written, when we beheld the king in the august assembly of the people on the day of the federation, after joining in the most solemn act of his religion, swear in the face of heaven and earth to employ the whole of the power delegated to him by the constitutional law of the state, to maintain the constitution decreed by the national assembly, and accepted by himself, and to execute the law. This letter was then on its way to Rome; a letter in which we read, that far from maintaining the constitution, or executing the laws decreed by the assembly, he will not only refuse to sanction part of its decrees, but asks counsels from its most inveterate enemy, in

whom alone he places his trust; assuring him of his earnestness to execute whatever orders he shall think fit to send him. From this transaction with an erroneous conscience, what miseries have flowed both for Lewis the sixteenth and his country! If a mind benevolently and piously disposed could reason and act thus, what must be the morality of the religion that admits such compromises? "Ah! popery," says the sentimental preacher, "what mischiefs hast thou not to answer for?"—But to return to the letter.

In consequence of the king's former dispatches, the pope had chosen doctors to counsel and direct him. The king informs his holiness that he had seen those doctors, as well as other estimable theologians. In the conferences which were held on this subject, the verdict was unanimous against the constitution, found to contain decrees contrary to ancient ecclesiastical usages, subversive of sacred dogmas, and of the hierarchy,

and discipline of the Gallican church. This is not the place to enter into the discussion of this subject, or it might be easily demonstrated, that these doctors of the conference had misled the king on each of those important topics; and that the error lay not in the reforms decreed, but in the abuses which were yet suffered to remain. All reformation, however, must have a beginning, and the constituent assembly advanced a considerable step. Few enlightened believers of the present day contend for the creeds as laid down by the reformers of the fifteenth century; yet our obligations to them are not the less for having first cleared the road. When the king, therefore, talks of ancient usages, he means the usages then abolished. Had he consulted history rather than his doctors, he might easily have found the periods when these usages had no existence, and consequently no connection with the primitive church.

The king goes on to describe the parties in this great quarrel which divided the clergy of

France. A considerable portion of the French, he observes, adhere to the decrees of the assembly; but amongst its opponents he numbers the most enlightened theologians, the most celebrated doctors, the very great majority, not to say universality, of the bishops of the Gallican church, and all good men attached to the worship of our fathers and to ancient tradition. On this enumeration no generous adversary would chuse to make any remark. The history of the popes and of the kings, ancestors of Lewis the sixteenth, might have taught him in what estimation to hold these theologians and their theology. "When I read books of theology," said pope Celestin, "I no longer comprehend the gospel, and when I read the gospel, I no longer comprehend theology."* "My clergy," said Chilperic, "are the locusts of my kingdom; I shall soon be forced, with my crutch in my hand, to beg alms from my bishops."† "I have saved

* History of the Popes, by Platina.

† Velly, History of France.

Europe," says Charles Martel, "from the Saracens; I could wish also to save it from the ecclesiastics, worse than all the Arabs of the universe."* The theology and tradition of the church being universal, was then the same as now; the usages and customs consequently the same: that epocha, which the presumption of science and the pride of literature have entitled the age of barbarism and darkness, was the golden age of the church; but even in those remote times, so great is the indocility and perverseness of mankind, we find kings that were heretics, and popes that were philosophers.

The dilemma in which the king is placed by granting or refusing his sanction to the constitution, is very forcibly represented. If he refuses, "a cruel persecution is raised; the number of enemies of the throne and altar is increased; a pretext for revolt is furnished, and the evils of France are re-

* Millot, Elements of History.

doubled." These are certainly very important considerations, and which on minds of earthly mould would exert a preponderating influence; but in the opposite scale are placed evils which amply counterbalance the former. If the constitution be accepted, "what a cause of scandal to the church; to our common enemies:" that is, the enemies of the pope and the king, "in giving up the heritage of Christ; the ministers of the Lord, who have respected the holy ark, are punished for their fidelity and attachment; the good shepherds are scattered, and the wolves are introduced into the sheepfold. Oh! who will deign to guide me and point out the path I ought to follow?" Unhappy monarch, into what hands wert thou fallen!

The address which follows forms too remarkable a contrast with the king's proclamations, the repeated assurances of his acquiescence in the decrees of the assembly, and his oaths to maintain and execute them, not

to merit particular observation. "Most holy father, in you alone I have placed my hope. The Gallican church claims all your solicitude, and the descendant of St. Lewis, obedient to the legitimate successor of St. Peter, demands from you not only advice, but spiritual orders, which he will be eager to execute. Nevertheless, if human considerations are of any weight; if the actual state of France may obtain some indulgence; if in the affairs of heaven we may be permitted to consult those of earth; would it not be best for me to temporise! The French people, ever allured by novelties, soon forget the object of their enthusiasm; the idol they raise is often the same day overthrown; time, experience, the counsels of wise men, heaven itself, will bring back this good people, misled for a moment, to the pale of the church, to their ancient usages, and their true pastors." That these were the real sentiments of the king at the moment admits of little doubt. It cannot be presumed that he would be guilty of dissimulation

towards the head of the church; insincerity would have been folly, and towards the vicegerent of heaven impiety. This supposition is the less admissible, as the king petitions for time. If in the affairs of heaven some indulgence may be granted to those of of earth; if human considerations be of any weight, let my devoted zeal for the interests of the infallible head of the church lead him to pardon me, that I am thus meek and gentle with its butchers. It is true, most holy father, that before those who call themselves the representatives of the people, I have lately, and in person, declared that I will defend and maintain constitutional liberty, the principles of which have been consecrated by the general wish in accord with my own. I have declared that I will do more; that I will prepare the heart and mind of my son for this new order of things. I have ordered it to be proclaimed, that the monarch, and the representatives of the nation, are united in the same sentiments, and the same wishes, in order that this opi-

nion, this firm belief, should spread the spirit of peace and goodwill throughout France; I have even menaced with my indignation those who should presume to doubt of the sincerity of my intentions: nay more; before this letter reaches your hands, I shall have sworn in the presence of the assembled nation on the festival, called the federation, to keep inviolate, and to execute that constitution which I have accepted. But these declarations, which I do not mean to observe; these oaths, which issued from my lips but came not from my heart, are mere human considerations, condescensions to the affairs of earth, which you, who know all things, will easily know how to appreciate. I have now taken the resolution to temporise; my people are light and frivolous; this airy enthusiasm for the revolution will soon be dissipated, this idol of yesterday will be overthrown to-morrow, perhaps to-day; and when I shall have expiated the faults I have myself committed, and for which I am now punished by heaven, its re-

lenting mercy will bring on a counter-revolution; liberty, the constitution, and the impure spirit which has breathed, will be chased away into night, and the church of France, like the phœnix, will rise more glorious and triumphant.

But to give those royal dispositions their due and proper effect, the active exertions of the spiritual head were indispensibly and pressingly necessary. "Most holy father" continues the king "be the interpreter of heaven! Pronounce quickly! Be the angel of light to dissipate the darkness! I wait with impatience for your decision, and for the bull which the clergy of France solicits, which the bishops request, and which is demanded by the eldest son of the church, ever faithful to the holy see."

When this famous bull, which justified the rebellion of the clergy, appeared in the beginning of the following year, it was generally

concluded from certain passages that the king, though in a more softened manner, had fallen, as well as the national assembly, under the displeasure of the court of Rome. "Whilst," says the holy father in this bull, "we were given up to these cares (that is, in sympathising with the French clergy and exhorting them to unite their tears and supplications with our own), news still more desolating strike our ear; we learn that the national assembly, that is to say, the majority, towards the middle of the month of July, have published a decree, which, under pretence of establishing only a civil constitution of the clergy, as the title seemed to announce, overthrew in reality the most sacred dogmas and the most solemn discipline of the church, destroyed the rights of the first apostolic see, those of the bishops, of the priests, of the religious orders of both sexes, and of the whole catholic communion; abolished the most holy ceremonies, took possession of the ecclesiastical domains and revenues, and intro-

duced such calamities as could scarcely have been believed, had they not been felt. We have not been able to avoid shuddering at the reading of this decree..... But to increase our grief, towards the end of August we received a letter from our dear son in Jesus Christ, Lewis the sixteenth, his most Christian majesty, in which he presses us in the most earnest manner to confirm by our authority, at least provisionally, five articles decreed by the assembly, and already clothed with the royal sanction; though those articles appeared to us contrary to the canons, nevertheless, out of regard to the king, we thought it our duty to temporise in our answer, and write to him, that we would submit those articles to a congregation of cardinals," etc. etc.

The first remark that occurs in comparing this letter with the bull, is the accordance of sentiment between the pope and the monarch, respecting the labors of the national assembly. There was nothing novel in the disco-

veries of the holy father; those invectives against the constitution had been uttered even to satiety by the discontented clergy, and it was natural that they should be rehearsed by the pope. In this confederation, no one, however, expected to have found Lewis the sixteenth; but while the nation was enthusiastic in its applauses of the king of the French, while every eye was raised towards the restorer of liberty, as he gave the solemn pledge of his attachment to the new order of things, the monarch had drawn up an act of indictment against his regenerated country, and was calling for judgment from its most inexorable foe.

It has generally been thought, and the conclusion was natural, that the pope in the present instance had instructed the king; but we now find that it was the king who had excited the pope. In this spiritual diplomacy there was much address. The affairs of the church, most holy father, are peculiarly yours.

I give you intimation of my real opinions; but before the nation I must appear a convert to its doctrines, and the assertor of its rights. I cannot wield the sword of authority against this irruption of heresy and schism, but you may fulminate in security from the citadel of the church; and if a splinter from the thunderbolt should glance by me, it will remove every suspicion of any alliance in the common cause.

As the king was thus strenuous in the defence of the altar, the pontiff could not fail returning his kindness, and declaring his sentiments in support of the throne. That the papal bull should impugn the heretical proceedings of the assembly was reasonable enough. His holiness, the constituted guardian of papal rights, acted in character; but this was only an act of self-defence: a sentiment of generosity led him to take a wider range, and to animadvert on the principles of the revolution itself..... "It is with this view,"

says the pope, "that they have established, as a right of man in society, that absolute liberty, which not only assures the right of being unmolested on account of religious opinions, but which grants the liberty of thinking, of speaking, of writing, and even of printing, with impunity, in matters of religion, all that the most unrestrained imagination may suggest; a shocking right, which nevertheless appears to the assembly to result from the equality and liberty, natural to all men. But what can be more monstrous than to establish among men this frenzied liberty and equality, which seems to stifle reason, the most precious gift which nature has given to men, and the only one which distinguishes him from animals?" The proofs of these assertions are equally clear with the text: "God," says the pope, "after having created man, after having established him in a place of delights, did he not threaten him with death, if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? And by this first

order, did he not put bounds to his liberty?—Human society, says St. Austin, is nothing else than a general convention to obey kings, and it is not so much from the social compact as from God himself, the author of all good and justice, that the power of kings derives its force!" We had always been led to think more highly of St. Austin's discernment; but the apophthegms of an African saint on matters of civil government are of little importance. These principles, whoever was their inventor, and the logic which the pope brings to their support, are worthy of each other. It was scarcely to be expected at the close of the eighteenth century, that we should have seen such paradoxes obtruded on the world by any authority, were it not that, driven from every part of the social and intellectual system, they found refuge in the conclave of cardinals, and composed part of the stores in the arsenal of the Vatican.

LETTRE XXXIII.

A M. le duc de Polignac.

18 Novembre, 1790.

Le tendre intérêt que vous nous témoignez, porte quelque allégement dans notre position; vos lettres sont toujours attendues avec impatience, et lues avec sensibilité; souvent j'ai surpris la reine versant des larmes, lorsque je lui communiquois celles de madame de Polignac.

Ceux qui, sous le prétexte spécieux de tout régénérer, sapent les bases de la monarchie, n'ont point diminué d'audace depuis votre départ; les maux de la France augmentent progressivement d'une manière effrayante; plus je médite l'histoire de mes aïeux, plus je suis convaincu que nous

 sommes

sommes à la veille de la subversion la plus cruelle dans ses résultats. Il étoit si facile d'opérer le bien, lorsque moi-même j'allois au-devant de tout ce que le peuple pouvoit raisonnablement ambitionner. Je n'ai du moins rien à me reprocher; j'ai tout fait pour étouffer les haines, prévenir les esprits, et concilier les cœurs. Aujourd'hui les agitateurs feignent de soupçonner la pureté de mes intentions. Les personnes honnêtes qui ont conservé de l'attachement pour moi, sont principalement en butte à tous les outrages d'une licence sans frein. Chaque jour voit éclore des projets plus ou moins désastreux; sans moyens répressifs, je fais seul tête à l'orage : mais cela peut-il durer long-temps? Adieu, monsieur.

Nous conserverons toujours pour vous les plus affectueux sentimens.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXIII.

To the duke of Polignac.

Nov. 18th, 1790.

THE tender interest which you express for us, Sir, serves to alleviate our situation; your letters are always expected with impatience, and perused with sensibility; and I have often surprised the queen shedding tears, while I imparted to her the letters of Madame de Polignac.

The men who, under the specious pretext of regenerating all things, undermine the foundations of the monarchy, have not become less daring since your departure. The disorders of France augment in the

most alarming progression, and the more I meditate on the history of my forefathers, the more I am convinced that we are on the eve of a subversion the most cruel in its consequences. It was so easy to effectuate good, while I myself anticipated the desires of the people in all they could reasonably hope. I have at least no subject of self-reproach.

I have done all that was possible to smother animosity, calm men's minds, and conciliate their hearts. The fomenters of trouble now affect to suspect the purity of my intentions. Men of probity, who have remained stedfast in their fidelity towards me, are particularly exposed to the outrages of this unbridled licentiousness. Every day gives birth to projects more or less disastrous, without any means of repression. I stem alone the stormy torrent, but can I long resist? Farewell, Sir, we shall

always cherish for you the most affectionate sentiments.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS.

ON THE THIRTY-THIRD LETTER.

Those who were conversant with the manners and usages of the late court, who knew with what effrontery the Polignacs abused the bounties of the king, the manner in which Lewis was treated, even in the presence of the queen, by these insolent favorites, and the public scandal to which their conduct, pushed to the last excesses of the most dissolute libertinism, gave rise; will bear with astonishment of the impatience

and sensibility with which their letters were expected and read, and the affectionate style in which they were answered.

It might from thence be concluded by such as were unacquainted with the history of those personages, either that the reproaches which have been made them were calumnious, or that the king had found nothing in their conduct which he deemed reprehensible, and was, therefore, an indirect participator in their guilt. A slight survey, however, of the character of this prince, as it is portrayed in these letters, may suffice to solve this dilemma. Henry, when he saw Falstaff extended on the field of battle, exclaims, that he could have better spared a worthier man. The family of the Polignacs, though they had contributed more than any other to the corruption of the court, and consequently to all the disgraces and misfortunes which had befallen it, had rendered themselves so necessary and familiar

to royal habitudes, that their absence was a real source of regret. The king, though free from every taint which public opinion had fixed on his court, was accustomed to meet those persons in scenes of licensed gaiety; and surrounded as he was at the moment of reading and writing those letters by a fierce democracy, with the noise of Liberty, Equality, and the Rights of Man, for ever obtruding on his ear, we must not wonder if he looked back with sensibility and regret to that period, when after the toils of the chace, or the labors of the anvil, which were his favorite occupations, he could, devoid of care, be admitted into the queen's parties, to while away an hour in convivial mirth or decent dissipation.

After expressing his personal feelings, the king gives his correspondent a sketch of the country. Since the departure of the Polignacs the evils of France had increased in a dreadful progression. It was on the eve

of the fourteenth of July that these emigrants, with the count d'Artois, escaped from Versailles. Since that period the Bastille had fallen, the nobility and clergy had surrendered their feudal privileges and titles, the constitution had been framed, and the king had avowed himself the guarantee and defender of the rights and liberties of the people. This epocha has generally been considered as the most glorious and happy of the revolution; but to Lewis, when writing to the Polignacs, it wore the appearance of horror and desolation.

It is impossible to read this letter without observing with what facility the king lent his mind to delusion, not only respecting others but himself. He might probably think that he had done more than he ought in the way of revolution, an opinion which the Polignacs shared; but how litle must he have entered into communion with his own heart, when he complains that the agitators

pretend to suspect the purity of his intentions. How pure his intentions were, in the sense in which he would wish the phrase to be understood, may be collected from the last and a few preceding letters; but it is scarcely candid to comment on those phrases too curiously, especially, when the party to whom they are addressed is the family of the Polignacs.

LETTRE XXXIV.*

Au roi d'Angleterre.

Paris, — 1790.

J'ai à me plaindre de votre ministère, et je me plains à vous; il a, dit-on, à venger de vieilles injures, et la guerre de l'Amérique se retrace à son souvenir. Ce n'est pas le lieu d'examiner si j'ai bien ou mal fait de me mêler des insurgés américains; ma profession de foi a été, pour ainsi dire, publique; et peut-être que je pourrois rappeler, avec honneur, mon opinion et cette

* Cette lettre ne fut pas envoyée au roi d'Angleterre. Le conseil privé de Louis XVI craignit d'avilir le monarque, en lui laissant faire un effort inutile. On voit au bas de la lettre, écrit de la main du roi, *Projet de lettre au roi d'Angleterre.* — *Note de l'Éditeur français.*

circonstance. Mais la guerre que la France fit alors à l'Angleterre, étoit franche et loyale. Nos guerriers, sur terre et sur mer, moissonnoient des lauriers. A présent on se bat dans l'ombre, et on profite de mes malheurs, et des troubles de la France, pour perdre le monarque et la monarchie : on diroit même que je suis le point de mire de tous les ennemis de la France. Ce qui m'afflige, c'est qu'on profite de votre bonne volonté pour moi, pour exciter des troubles, servir le parti des novateurs, et empêcher le retour du bon ordre. Les têtes couronnées doivent se protéger : elles se combattent loyalement ; mais elles se prêtent, avec la même loyauté, un mutuel secours. Faites cesser, je vous en prie, le zèle de ceux qui, en Angleterre, paroîtront vouloir servir leur pays en nuisant à la France et à son roi ; ce sera ajouter à ma reconnoissance et à mon attachement pour votre Majesté.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXIV.*

To the king of England.

Paris, — 1790.

I HAVE reason to complain of your ministry, and it is to yourself that I address my complaints. They have, it is said, old injuries to revenge, and the American war presents itself to their memory. This is not the moment to examine whether I

* This letter was not sent to the king of England. The privy council of Lewis the sixteenth were fearful of degrading the dignity of the monarch, by permitting him to make a fruitless effort. At the bottom of the original letter is written by the king, *Projet de lettre au roi d'Angleterre.* Sketch of a letter to the king of England. —*Note of the French Editor.*

acted well or ill by interfering in the concerns of the insurgent Americans; my profession of faith was, as it were, public; and perhaps I might recall with honor my opinion on those events. But the war then carried on by France against England was frank and loyal, and our warriors on land and sea reaped laurels. At present we fight in the dark, and advantage is taken of my misfortunes, and the troubles of France, to destroy the monarch and the monarchy. I seem, indeed, to be the peculiar mark of all the enemies of France; and what particularly afflicts me, that they avail themselves of your goodwill towards me, in order to excite troubles, to serve the faction of innovators, and prevent the return of order. Crowned heads ought to protect each other; they employ openly, when in hostility, the force of arms, but with the same frankness they afford each other mutual succour. Put a stop, I beseech you, to the zeal of those persons in England, who pretend to

serve their country by injuring France and her king; you will by so doing increase my gratitude and attachment to your Majesty.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE TRIRTY-FOURTH LETTER.

This letter, it appears, was written to the king of England, on the supposition that the British ministers had been active in promoting the cause of the French revolution. The motive for this act of hostility is stated to be the remembrance of the American war, and a desire to revenge the injuries which

the British crown had received from the dismemberment of the American colonies, facilitated by the alliance of the insurgents with France. The king appears to consider himself at present in a similar situation, with respect to his own subjects, to that in which he had contributed to place the king of England; but pleads that the present moment was not the time to enter into explanations whether he did right or wrong to mingle himself with the cause of the American colonies, and appeals to the opinions which he individually entertained at that time, and which were such as it became a king to entertain. *

If we look back to the period when the king wrote this letter, we may discover that his remonstrances were in part well founded. The British minister had joined in the general exultation which filled every heart

* Vide vol. 3.

that beats for the freedom and happiness of mankind; he had shared that sacred glow which animates every true British boson, when the cause of liberty is the subject of contest. In the first debates on the French revolution which took place in the British parliament, the minister declares, that he was "persuaded the troubles of France would terminate in general harmony and regular order; that when the tranquillity of that country was restored, it would prove freedom rightly understood; freedom resulting from good order and good government; and that thus circumstanced, France would stand forward as one of the most brilliant powers in Europe." That such language as this should be displeasing to the king is natural, and justifies the mode of complaint which he makes in the opening of his epistle.

But intructed as Lewis no doubt was in the parliamentary history of England, it is singular he should have forgotten, that the

minister who used this seditious language in favor of French liberty, had been a still more ardent defender of the cause of liberty in America, and that in this contest they had both fought on the same side. "I am persuaded," said this minister," and will affirm, that the war of the British government against the liberties of that country is a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war. That it was conceived in injustice, nurtured and brought forth in folly; that its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution, and devastation of every kind, and that in its prosecution every thing was to be found which constitutes moral depravity. The expence of it was enormous, much beyond any former expence, and yet what had the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats; victories only celebrated with temporary triumph over our brethren, whom we would trample down and destroy, or

narratives of the glorious exertions of men struggling in the holy cause of liberty."

The general arguments used by Lewis the sixteenth, in order to prevail with the king of England to check this revolutionary spirit in his ministry, appear more reasonable. "Crowned heads ought to protect each other; they fight loyally, but with the same loyalty they lend each other assistance." That is, in all contentions between princes, such as have hitherto desolated the world, and made it a vale of tears, the people are either condemned to a tame and silent acquiescence in the miseries of war, or are forced into acts of mutual slaughter and devastation, which the king calls reaping laurels for the glory of their respective masters; but whenever the people become so enlightened as to sit down themselves, and count the cost of those expensive operations of which they bear the whole burden, then it is that crowned heads, who have fought

so loyally, ought to lend mutual aid against a common foe, which the king characterises by the "sect of innovators who prevent the return of good order."

LETTRE XXXV.

A madame la princesse de Lamballe.

(Sans date.)

Vous avez trouvé, Madame, à la cour de St. James une terre hospitalière; un peuple tranquille et fiers des lois qui le protégent; un monarque cher à la nation angloise, et digne, par ses vertus, de son amour. Vous devez être heureuse, et vous voulez nous sacrifier votre bonheur; vous voulez revenir près de nous partager nos peines et celles de la reine; ce dévouement est trop noble et trop généreux, pour que je ne vous engage pas à en suspendre l'exécution encore quelque temps. Ce sera nous prouver que vous nous aimez, que de vous conserver pour des jours plus heureux, si nous pouvons encore les espérer. Le présent est af-

freux! quel sera notre avenir? — Dieu et les méchans seuls le savent. Nous désirons sans doute beaucoup vous voir; mais nous ne vous aimerions que pour nous, si nous ne balancions pas vos tendres sentimens par la prière la plus instante, de ne pas vous exposer dans un moment où tous les crimes ont leur impunité, et tous les excès leurs approbateurs.

Agréez, Madame, les assurances du plus tendre et du plus sincère attachement.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXV.

To the princess of Lamballe.

(Without date.)

You have found, Madam, at the court of St. James's an hospitable land, a people in tranquillity, proud of the laws by which they are protected, and a monarch dear to the English nation, and worthy of their affection by his virtues. You cannot but be happy, and you would sacrifice your felicity for us; you propose returning to share my sorrows, and those of the queen. This devotedness is too noble and too generous, not to lead me to persuade you to suspend for some time the execution of your purpose. You will give us a proof of your at-

tachment by preserving yourself for happier days, if we may still hope for such. The present is horrible, what will futurity do for us? God, and the wicked alone know. We no doubt wish much to see you, but we should love you only for ourselves, if we did not counterbalance your tender sentiments by our most earnest entreaties, that you will not expose your safety at a period when all crimes find impunity, and all excesses meet with approbation.

Receive, Madam, the assurance of the most tender and sincere attachment.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-FIFTH LETTER.

The name of Madame de Lamballe recalls one of those horrible epochas, which has done more towards rendering the cause of the revolution and liberty odious, than all the declamations and sophistry which have been urged against them.

This letter being without a date, it is difficult to know the precise moment in which it was written. The king has characterised it in a few words; "the present is hideous, what will be the future!" It appears, however, to have been written in the course of the year 1790, when none of those events so disgraceful to the revolution had taken place,

and when, had the king been sincere in his public professions, the palace of the Tuilleries and France might have been found as safe an asylum for Madame de Lamballe, as the court or the country of which the king makes the eulogium.

LETTRE XXXVI,

A M. de Malesherbes.

(Sans date, 1790.)

Vous prétendez, mon cher Malesherbes, que je dois demander le *veto*, et que je dois regarder cet acte de souveraineté comme le plus beau privilége de la monarchie chez un peuple libre. Que peuvent être pour moi des droits. . . . . lorsque j'ai fait le sacrifice de ceux dont les siècles avoient sanctionnés la nécessité, et qui faisoient le plus bel ornement de ma couronne? Je ne demanderai rien; mais je laisse aux vrais amis de la révolution, et à votre éloquence, mon cher Malesherbes, le soin d'acquérir ce beau droit que je crois propre à faire aimer la liberté, à la consolider, et à rendre plus auguste et plus digne des François, le

roi constitutionnel qu'on veut leur donner. Agissez, mon cher Malesherbes, et soyez sûr de ma reconnoissance. J'ai fait droit à vos demandes. Soyez persuadé que les services que vous me rendez ne sortiront jamais de ma mémoire: puis-je un jour les récompenser en roi.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXVI.

To M. de Malesherbes.

(Without date, 1790.)

You pretend, my dear Malesherbes, that I ought to demand the *veto*, and consider

this act of sovereignty as the first privilege of the monarchy among a free people. What avail rights to me who have sacrificed those of which ages had sanctioned the necessity, and which were the brightest ornament of my crown? I will ask nothing, but I leave to the real friends of the revolution and to your eloquence, my dear Malesherbes, the care of acquiring for me this noble right, which appears to me calculated to inspire the love of liberty, to consolidate it, and to render the constitutional king, whom they would give the French, more august and more worthy of the people. Go on, my dear Malesherbes, and be assured of my gratitude. I have complied with your requests; be persuaded that the services you render me will never be effaced from my remembrance; may I one day recompense them in a manner worthy of a king.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-SIXTH LETTER.

This letter, without date, appears to have been written in the beginning of the year 1790, when the question concerning the *veto* was debating, and which was afterwards decreed to be suspensive. The king at first seems careless about this prerogative, and does not conceal from M. de Malesherbes his chagrin at the loss of what he calls his royal rights, of which ages had sanctioned the necessity, and which formed the fairest ornament of his crown. This sullen indifference, however, passes quickly across his mind, and he instructs his minister to use all his efforts to clothe him with this prerogative, which he afterwards styles *un beau droit*, fitted to consolidate liberty as well as make it beloved,

and render more august and worthy of the French, the constitutional king whom they were desirous of obtaining.

The difference of style in the king's letters to his friends is not unworthy of remark. To the former *habitués* of the court, together with the pope, the revolution was all horror and chaos; the present was hideous, and the future still more dreadful. Malesherbes was the friend of rational liberty; he was a Mentor whose frowns the monarch dreaded; and though he might for a moment complain of the despoiled privileges he had lost, he smooths the wrinkles of his old minister by talking of the valuable rights which he has gained.

LETTRE XXXVII.

A M. l'abbé Maury.

3 Février, 1791.

M. l'abbé, vous avez le courage des *Ambroise*, l'éloquence des *Chrysostôme*. La haine de bien de gens vous environne. Comme un autre *Bossuet*, il vous est impossible de transiger avec l'erreur ; et vous êtes, comme le savant évêque de *Meaux*, en butte à la calomnie. Rien ne m'étonne de votre part. Vous avez le zèle d'un véritable ministre des autels, et le cœur d'un François de la vieille monarchie. Vous excitez mon admiration; mais je redoute pour vous la haine de nos ennemis communs; ils attaquent à la fois le trône et l'autel, et vous les défendez l'un et l'autre. Il y a quelques jours, sans votre imperturbable sens froid,

sans vos ingénieuses réparties, je perdois un François totalement dévoué à la cause de son roi, et l'église un de ses défenseurs les plus éloquens. Daignez songer que nous avons besoin de vous; que vous nous êtes nécessaire, et qu'il n'est pas toujours utile et toujours bien, de s'exposer inutilement à des périls certains. Usez avec modération de ces talens, de ces connoissances, de ce courage dont vos amis et moi tirons vanité. Sachez temporiser; la prudence est ici bien nécessaire: votre roi vous en conjure. Trop heureux s'il peut un jour s'acquitter envers vous, et vous prouver sa reconnoissance, son estime et son amitié.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXVII.

To the abbé Maury.

February 3d, 1791.

M. l'abbé, you have the courage of Ambrose, and the eloquence of Chrysostom. You are an object of hatred to many, since, like Bossuet, it is impossible for you to capitulate with error; and, like the learned bishop de Meaux, you are a mark for calumny. Nothing from you astonishes me; you have the zeal of a true minister of the altar, and the heart of a Frenchman of the old monarchy. While you excite my admiration, I fear for you the hatred of our common enemies, who attack at once the throne and the altar, while you are the

defender of both. Some days past, had it not been for your admirable presence of mind, your ingenious repartees, I should have lost a Frenchman, entirely devoted to the cause of his king, and the church one of its most eloquent defenders. Deign to remember that we stand in need of you, that you are necessary to us, and that it is not always useful, or always laudable, to expose ourselves to certain danger. Employ with moderation those talents, that knowledge, and that courage, which to your friends and me are a source of triumph. Learn to temporise; your king enjoins you to make use of that prudence which is now become so necessary: too happy if he should one day be enabled to acquit himself towards you, and prove to you his gratitude, esteem, and friendship.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

The most intrepid, and perhaps the most eloquent, defender, in the constituent assembly of abuses in the church and in the old government of France, was the abbé Maury. Born in the lower classes of society, he had raised himself to considerable eminence in the church, as far as related to ecclesiastical benefices, and by his diligence and perseverance, had the old fabric continued, would have no doubt attained still higher preferments. He was a man of some elevation of mind and independence of character; too openly immoral to be an hypocrite, and placing the defence which he made for things as they were, on its proper and legitimate basis, the inconvenience which would arise from any change to those who

were in actual possession. I never heard that the abbé talked much of the holiness of the ark, of the common enemy's invasion of the spiritual heritage of Christ, or of the wolves getting into the sheepfold; this was the whining cant of devotees, which the abbé disdained. The ark and heritage he defended with the courage of Ambrose and the eloquence of Chrysostom, were the church and the fourscore farms with which it had endowed him; and the only wolves he found in the sheepfold, were the decrees of the national assembly, which were about to spoil him of his fair possessions.

But however personal were the abbé's motives, and although he could not defend his own privileges without warring for those of others, the obligations of the court were not less due for the ardent zeal which he discovered on every occasion in the common cause. "Nothing," says the king, "astonishes me on your part." The public shared with his majesty

the merit which the poet attributes to the wisdom of "wondering at nothing;" but though the public would have rendered equal justice to the abbé's zeal and pertinacity, it is doubtful whether any party, even the least disposed to the revolution, would have so far dishonored religion, or the memory of its most illustrious defenders, as to have found prototypes for the abbé Maury in Ambrose, Chrysostom, or Bossuet.

Although there was nothing really astonishing in the conduct of this intrepid champion of the throne and the altar, we feel a sentiment of pity, in reflecting that the king had sunk so low in his own esteem as to write a letter of this import. The abbé's fame, which was spread wide through the world, must have reached the king. His levities, follies, prodigalities, and vices, were subjects of public notoriety, and none previous to the revolution had been more the subjects of his repartees and witticisms than

the court, and the king himself. Instances of these anti-royal pleasantries I have heard recorded by the abbé's associates; but these serve rather to raise than lower him in our esteem: since whatever dispositions he might have felt to criticise power, he had the generosity to employ his talents in aiding fallen greatness. He was incapable of breaking the reed which misfortune had bruised; and though numbers may have to recount the tricks which the abbé has played them, I have never heard him accused of malignity or meanness.

The style of this letter is merely complimentary; the king pays his court to this turbulent ecclesiastic, and beseeches him, like the princess of some romance her favored lover, not to expose his precious days to certain dangers. That the abbé had enacted the Ambrose, the Chrysostom, and the Bossuet, in the same manner as Rivarol, in a former letter, is said to rival Mably and Con-

dillac; that he had the zeal of a true minister of the altar, and the heart of a Frenchman of the old monarchy, might excite the king's admiration, though he had just before observed, that nothing the abbé did astonished him: but such expressions as these—"Deign to remember that you are necessary to us..... Use with moderation those talents, those lights, that courage, which to your friends and to me are a source of triumph! Your king conjures you..... Too happy to prove his gratitude, etc. etc." All this appears a style somewhat strange, when addressed by Lewis the sixteenth to such a personage as the abbé Maury.

This letter serves also to shew us the frame and temper of mind of the king at this epocha. Every thing in it is of counter-revolutionary tendency; but with the weakness and incertitude which were habitual to the king, nothing alarms him more than the abbé's intrepid and daring character. The king was a great

temporiser. He had recommended temporising to the pope, and the pope in his brief was temporising also. He gives the same counsel at present to the abbé. "Know how to temporise." The unfortunate Lewis temporised, alas! too long. The abbé, with all his daring boldness, was more prudent and more fortunate. He found that nothing was to be gained by temporising. The revolutionary mania increased rather than diminished; and when it came to a point that the abbé, who knew the signs of the times, deemed truly dangerous, he temporised by a voluntary exile. He is now, happily for himself, seated quietly in some bishopric near the Appennines with the title of cardinal, the well earned recompense of his zeal and his efforts; where he has amused his solitary hours in writing the history of his own times, no doubt a most curious and interesting work, and where he welcomes all well educated Frenchmen, of whatever political complexion, who will do him the favor of a visit.

LETTRE XXXVIII.

A Pie VI.

18 Février, 1791.

TRÈS-SAINT PÈRE,

MESDAMES ont manifesté le désir de visiter les états de votre Sainteté, et de voir cette Rome antique, où les vertus et le vrai mérite sont assis sur la chaire de St. Pierre. Mes tantes, plus heureuses que moi, sont allées chercher un instant de bonheur et de repos, qu'elles sont dignes de trouver près de votre Sainteté. Vous daignerez, très-saint Père, adoucir, par vos bontés, l'exil volontaire auquel les condamne les troubles politiques qui agitent la France. Mesdames témoigneront à votre Sainteté leur vive gratitude: pour moi, je désire particulièrement,

très-saint Père, vous démontrer, dans toutes les circonstances, la vénération profonde que je me fais gloire d'avoir pour vous.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Pius VI.

February 18th, 1791.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

MESDAMES have manifested a desire to visit the states of your Holiness, and contemplate that ancient Rome, where virtue

and true merit are seated on the throne of St. Peter. My aunts, happier than I am, are gone to seek, for a moment, that happiness and repose, which they deserve to find near your Holiness. Deign, holy father, to soften by your goodness that voluntary exile, into which they are led by the political troubles that agitate France. Mesdames will testify to your Holiness their lively gratitude; for myself, I desire particularly, most Holy Father, to demonstrate to you on all occasions that profound veneration in which I glory.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-EIGHTH LETTER.

THE desire shewn by the king's aunts to visit the states of his holiness, was perfectly reasonable. They had the sagacity to perceive that the state vessel, although repaired, would not fail to founder, as well from the insubordination of the crew, as the want of skill in the pilots; and therefore determined to seek the shore before the storm, which they saw approaching, gathered into a tempest. The king had the tenderest attachment to his aunts, which they repaid by a variety of good counsels, and which, although they were not always in the most perfect conformity to the new order of things, would, had they been followed, have prevented many of the evils

which befel that unfortunate prince. Finding at length the inutility of their further interference, they shook off the long habits of a sedentary life, and visited the more tranquil states of Europe. The obstacles which beset them on their quitting the vicinity of Paris, and the revolutionary difficulties they encountered in travelling through the departments, may be read in the debates of the national assembly, and more at large in the annals of M. Bertrand de Molleville.

LETTRE XXXIX.

A M. le comte d'Artois.

20 Mars, 1791.

MON FRÈRE,

LES gentilshommes qui vous ont suivi, et qui pour vous ont abandonné leur patrie, se plaignent amèrement. Ils ont tout quitté pour l'honneur, pour défendre le trône et l'autel : il ne s'agit pas de savoir si vous et eux avez sagement agi; souvent je vous ai attristé en vous portant mes plaintes à ce sujet. Leur sacrifice est d'autant plus méritoire, que délaissés, exilés, pour ainsi dire, dans le fonds des provinces, les bienfaits de la cour venoient rarement les chercher, et que leur patrimoine n'en étoit pas moins consacré à la défense de l'État. Les

gentilshommes se plaignent qu'ils sont maltraités par la haute noblesse, qui daigne à peine les regarder, et ne veut voir en eux que des inférieurs. Cependant le dévouement de cette classe de la noblesse me paroît digne d'éloges. Quel fut son intérêt en embrassant la cause des princes exilés? il n'en fut point pour elles; et cependant elle prend les armes, se prépare au combat; tandis que ceux qui feignent de les mépriser, semblent n'avoir fui que pour se soustraire au danger. Mon frère, ayez des égards pour ces braves François, qui se sont dévoués, et ne souffrez pas qu'ils soient avilis. Dites-leur, que toute ma noblesse m'est chère, et que je porte tous les François dans mon cœur. Oh! je souffre trop de votre absence, pour ne pas gémir de cet exil, qui me laisse à la merci de mes ennemis, qui me fait envisager pour ma noblesse et pour les princes de mon sang, les plus grands malheurs. Oh! dites souvent aux François, malgré mon vœu, malgré mes

ordres, réunis sur les bords du *Rhin*, que j'ai perdu toute espérance; qu'il m'est impossible de terrasser l'hydre des discordes, de réconcilier les esprits, de ramener la paix intérieure, mais que dans les grands dangers qui m'environnent, il me reste encore une resource, celle de savoir mourir.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XXXIX.

To the count d'Artois.

March 20th, 1791.

MY BROTHER,

THE gentlemen who followed you, and who have abandoned their country for

you, complain bitterly. They have relinquished every thing for honor, and the defence of the throne and the altar. We will not now discuss whether you and they have acted wisely or no; I have often made you melancholy by my remonstrances on this subject. The sacrifices they have made have so much the more merit, that abandoned, exiled, if I may use the expression, in their distant provinces, the bounties of the court but seldom reached them, and yet their patrimony was not the less consecrated to the defence of the state. These gentlemen complain that they are all ill-used by the higher nobility, who scarcely deign to look upon them, and will only see in them their inferiors.

Nevertheless, the conduct of this part of the nobility appears to me deserving of praise. What interest had they to embrace the cause of the exiled princes? They had none whatever; and yet they take up arms;

and prepare themselves for combat, while those who affect to despise them, seem to have fled themselves only to avoid danger.

My brother, pay attention to those Frenchmen who have devoted themselves, and do not suffer them to be degraded. Tell them, that all my nobility are equally dear to me, and that every Frenchman has a place in my heart. Alas! I suffer too much from your absence, not to deplore that exile which leaves me at the mercy of my enemies, and makes me foresee accumulated misfortunes for my nobility, and the princes of my blood. Oh! repeat often to those Frenchmen who are assembled against my wishes, against my orders, on the banks of the Rhine, that I have lost all hope; that it is impossible for me to subdue the hydra of discord, conciliate men's minds, and re-establish internal peace; but that amidst the great dangers with which I am surrounded,

there still remains for me one resource, that of knowing how to die.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE THIRTY-NINTH LETTER.

In the countries on the continent where the French nobility emigrated, nothing contributed to give the inhabitants so favorable an idea of the principles of the French revolution, as the conduct of those fugitive defenders of the throne and the altar. When they first made their irruption into the sober and moralised countries on either side the Rhine, the representations they gave of

the horrors and persecutions they had undergone, created an interest in their sufferings; but the grave citizens of Germany soon felt that their sympathy had been extorted under false pretences, and perceived with regret, that the manners and principles which those new colonists introduced, were ill calculated to increase the stock either of private or public virtues.

Misfortune, which is usually a corrective of irregularities in minds of generous mould, could have but little effect in strengthening those whose tone was completely destroyed by the disorder of their lives. The situation of their country, the destruction of their privileges, the calamities which appeared to surround their relatives and friends, might, at least, have served as a momentary check to that fury of prodigality and licentiousness which disgraced the first years of their flight. Instead of being subdued by the prospect of difficulties and

dangers, some of those exiles, like sailors on the approach of shipwreck, grew more dissolute; and the same conduct which had contributed more than most other causes to bring on the revolution in France, now produced its justification abroad. The revolutionists could not have employed more active emissaries than the emigrants of this description; they were the dreadful *propagande*, which made the cause of the throne and the altar odious.

That some of those fugitive Cesars should have imagined the world to be their own; that the property, the domestic happiness, the persons even of the people of other countries were at their absolute disposal, was natural enough, since it was a habit they had contracted in France. But Cesar, however arrogant he might have been in countries where he made irruptions, was never impolitic enough to treat his brother captains or colleagues with insolence. He

might have enslaved and degraded those whom he conquered, which, however, does not appear from history, but his soldiers always partook of his good fortunes. Let us beg pardon of the shade of Cesar for this profanation of his name, though only by way of contrast; but what was the conduct of those emigrants of the *haute noblesse?* It is the king's letter to his brother which forms the act of accusation. "These gentlemen complain that they are ill treated by the *haute noblesse*, who scarcely deign to look at them, and who see in them nothing but inferiors; nevertheless, the devotedness of this class of nobility appears to me worthy of eulogium. What interest had they to embrace the cause of the exiled princes? this cause was not their own; nevertheless, they have taken arms, and are preparing for action, while those who affect to despise them seem to have fled, only to save themselves from danger." What a picture of impolicy, arrogance, cruelty, and cowardice!

and this indictment is drawn up by a very tender hand; a hand much more disposed to soften than to aggravate: no suspicion of untruth or exaggeration can be admitted here. While the king remonstrates and accuses, he petitions and pleads; "My brother, have some pity for those brave Frenchmen who have thus devoted themselves, and do not suffer them to be degraded."

It has often been stated in justification of the king, that he was always adverse to the system of emigration. It appears from this letter, that this measure had frequently been the subject of contention between Lewis the sixteenth and his brother. "I have often," says the king, "wearied you with my complaints on this subject. I suffer too much from your absence not to grieve at this exile, which leaves me at the mercy of my enemies, and which holds out to my nobility, and the princes of my blood,

the prospect of the direst misfortunes. Oh! repeat often to those Frenchmen in spite of my wishes, in spite of my orders, assembled on the banks of the Rhine, etc." Now, if these things be true; if this emigration, if these hostile preparations were contrary not only to the king's wishes, but to his orders; if this insulting defiance held out to France by those titled malcontents, was attended with such imminent dangers both to the royal authority and person, and the event proved that those dangers were not chimerical; what remorse ought to fill the bosoms of those who persisted in this act of hostility, in spite of repeated warnings and supplications, till they had consummated the fall of the monarchy, the ruin of the monarch, and their own?

In viewing the matter on this side only, and in reflecting on all the evils which followed those acts of rebellion and projected hostility on the part of the princes, it is

difficult to suppress a sentiment of indignation. But in comparing the different parts of these letters, we can scarcely believe that all the princely feelings of enmity towards the revolution had emigrated beyond the frontiers, or that there was not as much sin committed against liberty within the walls, as without. How is it possible to reconcile the lamentations of the king on his brother's emigration, with the eulogium he is disposed to pass on those disinterested provincials, who had taken arms, and were preparing for combat? Had the king been well persuaded that these emigrant assemblies on the Rhine were contrary to his wishes and his orders, this surely is not the language he would have used. Instead of instructing the count d'Artois that these gentlemen had left every thing for honor, for the defence of the throne and the altar, which was the court *synonyme* at the time for counter revolution; instead of recommending them to the special protection of

his brother, as that part of the family of Frenchmen whom he himself cherished the most; it is more reasonable to suppose that he would have given counsels or instructions of a tendency totally the reverse. His language to his brother might have been that of admonition; your example, he might have told him, has seduced others who have not your motives for this desertion of their country, and who, from a vain disposition, have presumed that the surest way of recommending themselves to the notice of the court, and raising themselves from the obscurity to which their situation had condemned them, was by acts of hostility against their country—Tell those mistaken gentlemen, that not only they act in contradiction to my wishes, but that I give them my express orders to return back to their provinces, on pain of my severest displeasure.

But however slight the study we make of the king's character, we shall find no

difficulty in reconciling these apparent contradictions. There is always a disposition in the human mind to struggle in favor of our wishes, even against impossibilities. When all reasonable hope of attaining an object has vanished, we still cling to that feeling which gave us so much pleasure, when the prospect of reaching it was yet in view. Like passengers, beaten by the tempest, and anxious for land, who hail every fog-bank because it wears its appearance; so the king, though lost to all hope, still looks with hesitating complacency beyond the frontiers, and snatches a momentary relief from despair, in the enjoyment of the expectations, however light and ill founded, of those devoted to his service. It is by this kind of compromise with feeling, that we may explain the contradiction in the letter; to which we may add the impressions continually made on his mind, by such as were not so clear sighted to his danger as himself.

The greatest enemies the king had to contend with were those of his own household. Driven on by the impetuosity or imprudence of those around him into false measures, he never had the courage to withstand solicitation, or perseverance to cause the orders which he had given to be executed. His opinion, it appears, was always contrary to this emigration, and for his own interests, and those of the emigrants themselves, it was the wisest opinion he could have adopted. His advice had also been followed by intreaties and by orders. He saw clearly, that with the conduct he pursued, a conduct always subservient to the caprices and passions of others, that his ruin was approaching; he talks of the imminent dangers which surrounded him, of " his last resource," which was death; but the count on the banks of the Rhine remained inexorable. There he heroically continued till the war approached; at that period he left the provincial noblemen,

who had taken arms, and prepared for combat, to fight his battles, and the king his brother to the fatal resource which his prophetic spirit had too clearly predicted.

LETTRE XL.

A M. Montmorin.

Paris, ce . . . . . 1789.

La justification présentée par *Chabroud*; le décret de l'Assemblée, et le jugement du Châtelet, qui blanchissent le duc d'Orléans et ses coaccusés, excitent mon indignation. L'assassinat est donc justifié? Car rien de plus certain que, le 6 octobre, des assassins devoient frapper la reine; et que mes gardes du corps n'ont été attaqués, et immolés, que parce qu'on n'avoit pu les intimider, ni les faire manquer à la fidélité qu'ils devoient à leur roi. Ainsi le plus horrible attentat et le plus noble dévouement ne trouveront point, l'un la punition qu'il mérite, l'autre la justice qui lui est due. Il est dans tout ceci des menées odieuses, des intrigues abo-

minables, dont je connois les principaux acteurs : leurs intentions criminelles me sont dévoilées, et leur espoir n'est fondés que sur les motifs qui entraînent la majorité de l'Assemblée, la crainte et la foiblesse. Plus je considère la conduite du duc d'Orléans, et plus je suis persuadé qu'il est le principal moteur de toutes ces ténébreuses opérations, je ne sais pas par quel motif, dirigées contre moi. L'ambition égare ce prince déloyal, qui, les 5 et 6 octobre, dirigeoit maladroitement les colonnes des brigands, dont la Fayette auroit dû empêcher le départ; dont le maire de Paris devoit arrêter les chefs, s'il avoit eu les premiers élémens de la science administrative en fait de police, et que d'Estaing auroit pu mettre en fuite en feignant de les attaquer, s'il avoit agi franchement, de lui-même, et sans attendre des ordres inutiles à un homme qui sait oser et faire son devoir. Mais ces personnages vouloient tout ménager: ils ont eu peur, et n'ont su de

quel côté faire pancher la balance; aussi nulle confiance ne les environne: tous les partis dissimulent avec eux, et préfèrent céder aux circonstances, que d'attendre leur salut de leur politique impuissante, et de leur dangereuse inertie.

Il y a deux mois que j'avertis le ministre de la justice, d'après des avis particuliers et venant de bonne source, qu'il y avoit eu au Palais royal un repas nocturne mystérieux, présidé par Latouche, où se trouvoient, parmi un grand nombre de députés, Mirabeau, Sieyes, Biron, les deux Lamette, Taleyrand Périgord, le curé Grégoire, Laclos, et le blanchisseur Chabroud. On a prétendu qu'il falloit jeter un voile sur les journées des 5 et 6; que la procédure, dont s'occupoit alors le Châtelet, étoit un attentat à la liberté, à l'inviolabilité dont les députés doivent jouir; qu'il ne falloit pas souffrir que le Châtelet prononçât ce jugement, et le menacer du cour-

roux de l'assemblée, et de la vengeance du duc d'Orléans. On a vivement applaudi à ces principes. Il s'est ensuite engagé une conversation très-curieuse, entre Mirabeau, Sieyes et Latouche.

Mirabeau se plaignoit amèrement de la conduite du duc d'Orléans dans la nuit des 5 et 6 octobre. "Un peu plus d'audace, a-t-il dit, et il étoit tout ce qu'il vouloit être." Latouche a justifié son maître, et certifié, qu'il avoit entendu dire au duc d'Orléans, que l'arrivée subite de l'armée parisienne, qui ne devoit se trouver à Versailles que le 6 au matin après le dénouement; que l'air satisfait, quoique étudié, de la Fayette, et l'opposition qui s'étoit manifestée parmi les députés patriotes sur le traitement à faire au roi, l'avoient empêché d'agir; enfin que le désordre, qui suit toujours une multitude aveugle, avoit empêché les agens du duc de se réunir et d'exécuter; Mirabeau a paru plus satisfait

de cette justification : Sieyes a dit alors avec beaucoup d'humeur: "J'avois fait observer au duc d'Orléans, la tournure que prenoit le mouvement populaire. Au reste, ce n'est qu'un coup manqué, la faute pourroit être réparée."

Avant de se séparer il a été décidé qu'il falloit épouvanter les juges, et leur dicter l'arrêt. "C'est une affaire enterrée, a dit Mirabeau ; ceux qu'on voudroit frapper, sont trop fort pour l'être; ils savent parer les coups d'une manière trop dangereuse pour les assaillans."

Ainsi le Châtelet a cédé à la crainte. Je voulois appeler de ce jugement inique ; mais j'ai dû céder à mon conseil, qui m'a fait envisager l'audace de mes ennemis, et la faveur populaire qui les environne. J'en appellerai un jour au tribunal du peuple; et j'ose espérer que le Français, alors, vengera son roi, et fera punir les assassins. Je

ne puis donc approuver le projet que vous m'avez présenté. Il peut être bon pour des temps de paix et d'union: il seroit dangereux dans des momens de trouble et d'orage.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XL.

To M. Montmorin.

Paris, ... 1789.

The justification presented by Chabroud, the decree of the Assembly, and the sentence of the Chatelet, which acquits the

duke of Orleans and his accomplices, excite my indignation. Assassination, then, is justified; since nothing is more certain, than that on October 6th, assassins were to have murdered the queen, and that my body-guards were attacked and sacrificed, only because they could not be intimidated, or compelled to violate the fidelity which they owed their king. Thus the most horrible attempt, and the most noble devotedness, will never meet, the one with the punishment it merits, the other with the justice which is its due. In all this there are odious maneuvres, abominable intrigues, of which I know the principal authors; their criminal intentions are unveiled to me, and their hopes are founded only on the motives which decide the majority of the Assembly; fear and weakness. The more I consider the conduct of the duke of Orleans, the more I am persuaded that he is the main-spring in all these operations

of darkness, directed against me, I know not from what motive. Ambition leads astray this disloyal prince, who, on the fifth and sixth of October, conducted so unskilfully those columns of banditti, whose departure La Fayette should have prevented, whose chiefs should have been arrested by the mayor of Paris, had he possessed the first rudiments of the science of administration respecting police, and whom d'Estaing might have put to flight, by feigning to attack them, if he had acted frankly and of his own accord, without waiting for orders useless to a man, who knows how to dare and do his duty. But those personages wished to take all precautions; they were afraid, and knew not on which side to turn the scale; they therefore inspire no confidence; all parties dissemble with them, and prefer yielding to circumstances, rather than expect any thing from their impotent policy and dangerous inaction.

'For two months past, I have given notice to the minister of police, in consequence of particular information from a good source, that there has been a nocturnal and mysterious repast at the Palais Royal, presided by Latouche, at which were present, amongst a great number of deputies, Mirabeau, Sieyes, Biron, the two Lameths, Taleyrand Perigord, the curate Gregoire, Laclos, and the white-washer Chabroud. They pretended, that a veil must be cast over the days of the fifth and sixth of October; that the proceedings which then occupied the Chatelet, were treason against liberty, and against the inviolability of the deputies; that the Chatelet ought not to be suffered to pronounce this sentence, but be menaced with the wrath of the assembly, and the vengeance of the duke of Orleans. These principles were highly applauded; and a very curious conversation ensued between Mirabeau, Sieyes, and Latouche,

Mirabeau inveighed bitterly against the conduct of the duke of Orleans, on the night of the fifth and sixth of October. "A little more energy," said he, "and he was all he wished to be." Latouche justified his master, and asserted that he had heard the duke of Orleans declare, that the sudden arrival of the Parisian army, who were not to march to Versailles until the sixth in the morning after the catastrophe; that the satisfied though studied air of La Fayette, and the opposition which arose among the patriotic deputies, relative to the manner of treating the king, had prevented him from acting; and that, upon the whole, the disorder, which always accompanies an headlong multitude, had hindered the agents of the duke from uniting, and executing their projects. Mirabeau appeared more satisfied after this justification, but Sieyes said, with apparent ill humor, "I had made known to the duke of Orleans

the turn which the popular movement was taking; but, after all, it is only an opportunity lost; the fault may be repaired." -- Before the assembly separated, they agreed that it was necessary to terrify the judges, and dictate to them their decision. "It is an affair buried;" cried Mirabeau, "those, at whom the blow is levelled, are too strong to be attained, and know how to parry the stroke in a manner too dangerous for the assailants." Thus the Chatelet has yielded from fear. I would have appealed from this iniquitous sentence, but paid a just deference to the opinion of my council, who represented to me the audacity of my enemies, and the popular favor with which they were surrounded.

I will appeal one day to the tribunal of the people, and dare hope that the French nation will then avenge its king, and punish the assassins. I cannot, therefore, ap-

prove the project which you have presented to me; it may perhaps be well for times of peace and union, but it would be dangerous in those turbulent and tempestuous moments.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTIETH LETTER.

One of the great errors into which the court was betrayed, was the making the revolutionary movement of the fifth and sixth of October the subject of judiciary inquisition. The events which took place on those memorable days, appear to be nothing more than continuations of that insurrectional spirit which broke out on the fourteenth of July,

against the spirit, and defenders of the old system; and though private ambition may have mingled itself in those scenes, yet as the avowed end, that of placing the assembly and the executive power in the capital, had been obtained, it discovered no great mark of wisdom to inquire into the means by which it was effected. At that epocha, it is possible that the duke of Orleans might have indulged the hope of obtaining the place of lieutenant-general of the kingdom, the crime of which he was accused; and that Mirabeau might have had the ambition of becoming his minister, or master; but as the king at that period had refused at Versailles, or at least hesitated, to give his sanction to the decrees of the assembly, and three months afterwards at Paris had voluntarily engaged in the most solemn and unequivocal manner, to maintain and defend the principles of the constitution, it is scarcely to be presumed, that the popular causes which had produced this great change in favor of na-

tional liberty, were fitted to become subjects of mere judiciary examination.

Mirabeau was acquitted on evidence that was not to be suspected. The personage who was deeply interested to bring all popular culprits to justice, found nothing of guilt that attached to this turbulent tribune: but abbe Maury's concern for the reputation of the duke of Orleans, led him to express his wishes, that a formal act of impeachment by the house might give this prince the means of proving his innocence. The popular party of the assembly, unwilling to give the Duke, or themselves, the trouble of farther defending the irregularities of these revolutionary days, thinking, probably, with Barnave, that the only conspiracy was in the prosecution, and that the only effect it ought to produce was the most profound contempt for the prosecutors and their agents, decreed, that there was no cause for accusation, and annulled the whole of the proceedings.

The *côté droit*, or the royalty side of the assembly, indignant as usual when any great question was carried against them, and when the tumult of the galleries, which was too often the case, condemned them to silent disapprobation, withdrew from the chamber, that they might not share in the iniquity of the decision. Their indignation, it seems, was shared by the king, who, in his letter to the minister, passes in review the prominent events of those memorable days. What appears most worthy of notice, is, that the king's mind seems more heated after the interval of a year, than at the time of the transaction. For the duke of Orleans he preserves the same cordial antipathy. He alluded to him in his letter written on the day to the count d'Estaing, where he talks of crime and ambition; but when he accuses the latter of unfair dealing in not attacking the Parisians, he forgets that the count's projects were rebuked by his own orders, and that he had written to him, "no

aggression, no movement, which can wear the appearance that I mean either to avenge or defend myself."

Next to the impolicy of making this insurrection the object of either judiciary or legislative investigation, may be classed the unnecessary pains taken by the leading members of the popular party, to clear themselves from the charges laid against them. The king is informed by his spies, that mysterious nocturnal repasts took place, in which this subject was treated, and conversations between the parties are related. That discussions on this subject might have passed at the Palais Royal, where the principle of the inviolability of the members of the legislative body might have been agitated, is highly probable; but the mysterious repast seems to be misinformation, unless more credit is to be given to a spy of the court than to the declarations of some amongst the pretended guests named in this letter, who

assure me that those mysterious meetings never took place.

But however important may be the truth or error of this information respecting these meetings, nothing forms a more decisive proof of the general utility of the events of those two days, than the continuance of the angry feelings which they excited in the royalist party. The king's resentment was so little abated, that he felt himself disposed to appeal from what he calls the iniquitous judgment. Overruled by the wisdom of his council, he resolves to appeal at some future day to the tribunal of the people, when he hopes that the French will avenge their king, and punish the assassins. Vain appeal! the king, however, caught wisdom from his council, and enjoined his minister to suppress the project, which he appears to have formed, in compliance with the will of his royal master.

LETTRE XLI.

A M. l'archevêque d'Arles.

29 Juin, 1791.

Vous rappelez, M. l'archevêque, pour consoler le plus infortuné des rois, l'exemple de David, obligé de fuir devant son fils Absalom. Monarque abandonné! père malheureux! ce n'est pas la vengeance que David appelle à son aide; ce n'est point la foudre du ciel irrité qu'il sollicite; c'est dans le roi des rois qu'il met toute sa confiance! Il prie pour un fils ingrat; il pardonne au monstre qui le poursuit, et qui paroît avoir soif de son sang. Cet acte de l'amour paternel est sublime. Je me fais gloire d'avoir, avec David, la même conformité de sentimens et d'idées. Des ingrats

me persécutent, ils calomnient un tendre père; et je ne songeois, moi, qu'à leurs intérêts, qu'à leur bonheur. C'est aux pieds de la religion que je dépose les injures faites au monarque. Que le peuple soit heureux, et je suis satisfait. Pour moi, je goûte une douce satisfaction lorsque je puis, dans la solitude, bénir la Providence, me soumettre à ses décrets : c'est alors que tous les maux, toutes les injustices, tous les attentats sont oubliés! Ne suis-je pas trop heureux, M. l'archevêque, et la justice divine peut-elle être satisfaite? Elle vouloit me punir de lui avoir préféré l'insolente philosophie qui m'avoit séduit, et m'a précipité dans un abîme de malheurs! Pour elle j'ai négligé ce culte antique de mes aïeux, si cher à St. Louis, dont je me glorifie de descendre. Vous, M. l'archevêque, dont les vertus religieuses sont admirées, qui les préférez à celles dont la philosophie tire vanité, et qui, vues avec le prisme de la religion, resemblent si fort à des vices; offrez, pour

votre roi malheureux, les vœux d'une ame embrasée de l'amour de Dieu; d'un saint évêque que je peux comparer à Ambroise: avec cette différence, que Théodore s'humilioit devant lui, pour avoir châtié cruellement un peuple rebelle; et que je sollicite le secours de vos prières, pour ramener un peuple qui jamais ne pourra me reprocher d'avoir fait couler ni son sang ni ses larmes.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLI.

To the archbishop of Arles.

June 29th, 1791.

To console the most unfortunate of kings, you recall, my lord archbishop, the example of David, compelled to fly before his son Absalom. Forsaken monarch! unfortunate father! it is not vengeance that David calls to his aid; it is not the thunderbolt of irritated heaven that he invokes: in the king of kings he places all his confidence. He prays for an ungrateful son; he pardons the monster, by whom he is pursued, and who seems to thirst for his blood. This act of paternal affection is

sublime, and I glory in having a confirmity of sentiments and ideas with David. Persecuted by ungrateful children, who calumniate a tender father, I have only thought of their interests, and their happiness. At the feet of religion I depose the injuries heaped upon the monarch; may the people be happy, and I am satisfied. I enjoy a soothing satisfaction, while in my hours of solitude I can bless providence, and submit myself to its decrees; it is then that all injuries, all injustice, all wrongs are forgotten. Am I not too happy, my lord archbishop, and can divine justice be satisfied? I have been punished for having preferred that insolent philosophy which has seduced, and plunged me in an abyss of misery; for that I neglected the ancient worship of my forefathers, so dear to St. Lewis, from whom I am proud of descending. You, my lord archbishop, whose religious virtues inspire admiration, and who prefer them to those of which philose-

phers are proud, but which viewed through the prism of religion, bear so near a resemblance to vice, offer for your unfortunate king the vows of an heart, inflamed by divine love; of an holy bishop, whom I may compare to Ambrose, with this difference, that Theodosius humbled himself before him, after having cruelly chastised a rebellious people; and I solicit the aid of your prayers, to bring back a people who will never have to reproach me with having caused either their blood or tears to flow.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-FIRST LETTER.

THE evasion from Paris was one of those extraordinary events in the revolution, which

imprinted a deep and ineffacable color on the fate of the constitutional government, and on that of Lewis the sixteenth. The courtly annalist agrees, that the flight towards Montmedi was incontestably the most pernicious step that the king had taken, and ought to have rendered miserable all, whatever were their motives, who had to reproach themselves for having determined him to this fatal measure, either by their counsel or their intreaties.

It has been always a contested, and remains yet an unsettled point with moralists and metaphysicians, what is the true standard of moral action. Religion and public utility have been claimed each as its proper basis. The difficulty lies probably in the application of the principle; for here we see a king, whom the uncourtly world would brand with the basest perfidy, with the most cowardly dissimulation, pleading the cause

of religion for his conduct, and alledging that his mind was occupied solely with objects of public utility and the happiness of ungrateful subjects.

The friend of religion might answer, and with the confidence of truth, that the appeal made by the king to providence, and the soothing satisfaction he felt, in submission to its decrees, were founded on erroneous notions of religion, which teaches us not only to desist from wrong in the expectation of good, but to abstain from every appearance of evil. Now so to speak and act as to cause it to be understood that we are persuaded of the utility of an object, and are anxious for its success; to appear solicitous that this conviction of our sincerity should be impressed on the minds of others; to have betrayed them into the belief that our heart and soul and mind and strength are all bent on the furtherance and completion of one great plan, on which we

acknowledge that the happiness and well being of ourselves, and of others is built; while we are secretly contriving to overthrow the fabric which we have publicly raised; and wait the moment of security to mock the credulity of those we have deluded..... Oh, no! these are not sentiments or actions which providence can sanction, or religion approve; and, were the moral attributes of the one, or the moral obligations of the other, rightly understood, self-complacency in such circumstances must be changed into self-abhorrence, and devotional triumph into the rendings of remorse.

That these observations apply immediately to the principles and conduct of Lewis the sixteenth, must be admitted, when we turn back to the history of this epocha, and look into the official documents of the royal administration. It was but a few weeks previous to his flight that the king had instructed his minister of foreign affairs to

make known his will and intentions, through his ambassadors, to every court of Europe. "The king orders me, Sir," says M. Montmorin, "to inform you, that his most formal intention is, that you manifest his sentiments on the revolution, and on the French constitution, to the court in which you reside. The ambassadors and ministers of France residing at every court of Europe receive the same instructions, in order that no doubt remain, either with respect to the intentions of his majesty, the free acceptance which he has given to the new form of government, or his *irrevocable oath* to maintain it.— The states-general were assembled, and took the title of national assembly; a constitution, fitted to ensure the happiness of France and of the monarch, took place of the old order of things, under which the seeming force of royalty concealed only the real force of the abuses of a few aristocratical bodies.

"The national assembly adopted the form of the representative government, joined to hereditary royalty; the legislative body is declared permanent, the election of ministers of worship, of administrators and judges, was given back to the people; the executive power was conferred on the king; the formation of the law on the legislative body; and the sanction on the monarch; the public force, both external and internal, was organised on the same principles, and after the fundamental basis of the division of powers; such is the new constitution of the kingdom.

"What is called the revolution is nothing more than an annihilation of abuses, accumulated for ages by the errors of the people, and the power of ministers, which has never been that of kings; these abuses were not less fatal to the nation than to the monarch. Under former reigns, authority had continually attacked those abuses, without power to destroy them. They

exist no longer. The sovereign nation acknowledges none but citizens equal in rights, no other despot than the laws, no other organs than public functionaries, and the king is the first of those functionaries; such is the French revolution.

" This revolution must have for its enemies all those, who, in the first moments of error, regretted from personal feelings the abuses of the old government. But the king, whose true force is indivisible with that of the nation, who has no other ambition than the happiness of the people, no other real power than that which is delegated to him; the king ought not to have hesitated adopting a happy constitution, which regenerated, at the same time, his authority, the nation, and the monarchy. All his power has been preserved to him, except the formidable power of making laws.

" The most dangerous of his enemies

are those who have affected to throw doubts on the intentions of the monarch; these men are either very guilty or very blind; they think themselves the friends of the king, and they are the only enemies of royalty; they would have deprived the monarch of the love and confidence of a great nation, if his principles and probity had been less known. Ah! what has the king not done to prove that he also reckoned the revolution and the French constitution among his titles to golry? After having accepted and sanctioned every law, he has neglected no means to cause them to be executed. In the month of February in the last year, he promised in the national assembly to maintain them; he took the oath amidst the universal federation of the kingdom; honored with the title of restorer of French liberty, he will transmit more than a crown to his son, he will transmit to him a constitutional royalty."

The king repels the suggestions of those

"enemies of the constitution, who assert that he is unhappy, that his authority is degraded, and his person not free," by contrary assertions, for which he gives the most honorable motives. This pretended want of freedom he characterises as an "atrocious calumny, if it be supposed that his will could be forced; absurd, if his want of liberty could be presumed, from the consent which his majesty has often expressed of remaining amidst the citizens of Paris; a consent which he owed to their patriotism, even to their fears, and especially to their love. These calumnies, nevertheless, have penetrated into foreign courts, and have been repeated by Frenchmen, who have voluntarily exiled themselves from their country instead of sharing in its glory, and who, if they are not its enemies, have at least abandoned their post of citizen."

The remainder of this letter is in the same strain, and is signed by the minister of foreign affairs, M. Montmorin.

When this letter, addressed to the French ambassadors, was read in the assembly, it excited, as might naturally be supposed, the warmest enthusiasm. A deputation of the whole assembly to the king was proposed, and a numerous body accompanied the president to express the sentiments which it felt. "I am deeply affected," replies the king, "at the justice which the national assembly renders me. If it could read my heart, it would see nothing there but sentiments fitted to justify the confidence of the nation. All suspicion would be banished. We should all be happy."

Six weeks after writing this letter and giving this reply to the deputation of the assembly, the king takes his flight, leaving behind him a declaration or memorial, reprobating, in the most unqualified and unmeasured terms, every act of the assembly from its commencement, and every tittle of the constitution which he had so irre-

vocably sworn to defend. The versatility of the king's character, it has been observed, was amongst its defects; yet it would have been difficult to believe, that in the interval between the writing the letter to the ambassadors and his flight from Paris, he could have changed the whole of his opinion. M. Bertrand, nevertheless, who pretends to be initiated in all his secrets, will not permit us to indulge the possibility of such inconstancy, and which candor might resolve into constitutional weakness. He forces us into the belief of the most flagrant conduct on the part of his master, when he assures us, that previous to the writing of this letter to the ministers at foreign courts; previous to the king's personal declarations in the assembly, promising and swearing to maintain the constitution in all its points, the king was confirmed in his project of departure for Montmedi, and in his last letter to M. Bouillé fixed the epo-

cha at the end of April, or the first days of May."

If such be really the case, it creates some surprise why the king should have been brought, at the moment nearly of his premeditated evasion, to commit himself so solemnly to foreign courts. He might readily have found the means of evading this last act, the most prominent of all, since it was an appeal for the rectitude of his conduct and the sincerity of his intentions to the world—No! "His majesty," says the same apologist, "seeing that no act contrary to his religious principles was the condition of the propositions made him, decided on accepting them; and, in consequence, ordered his minister for foreign affairs to write to all the ambassadors and ministers of France in every court of Europe, that famous circular letter."

There appears something like a contradiction in this last assertion; for the annalist

is peremptory in his statements, that the primary motives for the flight to Montmedi were the indignities offered the king for his attachment to the refractory clergy; and the circular letter, so far from containing nothing hostile to the king's religious principles, mentions, as the first article of the accepted constitution, the reform which had taken place in the church. The ex-minister is indeed shocked at the king's insincerity in the declaration he made on his return, and observes, that "the mouth of kings ought at all times and in all circumstances to be the purest organ of truth and good faith." It would be ungenerous to press the ex-minister for a definition of those terms; but what he means in the present instance by religious principles we are at a loss to conjecture. We have heard of men braving every danger, and sacrificing their lives in defence of speculative errors; the noble army of martyrs were, for the most part, soldiers of this description; but history, I believe, has seldom presented

us with a recruit to this honorable band, who pleaded religious principles for the violation of every common rule and precept of moral obligation; the triumph of martyrs was not like that of the wily Carthaginian, to deceive and fly; in the face of tortures and death they witnessed an honest confession, scorning every compromise with dissimulation or falshood, and with the man described by the poet, just and tenacious of right, stood firm against the clamor of the malignant crowd, mocked the frowns of the instant tyrant, and braved heroically the burst of power, about to overwhelm and crush them.

But while we adopt the opinion of the annalist, and agree that this evasion was the most fatal step which the king had taken, we are forced to enlarge the measure of reproach which he confines to those who counselled him, and extend it to such as to the archbishop of Arles, who urges, with professional

courtesy, the example of David as a religious topic of consolation. The king finds the resemblance perfectly natural, and glories in his conformity of sentiments and ideas with the Hebrew prince. It is at the feet of religion that he offers up the injuries done to the monarch, and, with the complacency of a pardoned penitent, dwells on the happiness of having satisfied divine justice.

This disposition and frame of mind, under the influence of just views and motives, is no doubt highly praise-worthy; but the error into which the king appears to have fallen was a fatal misapprehension respecting the nature of his offence. It was no the commission of acts conceived with systematic fraud and treachery; it was not the violation of the most solemn obligations and most sacred oaths; it was not the guilt which, according to the poet, always haunts the heart of perjured kings; these were not the offences that

humbled him in the dust before the throne of divine justice; with these affairs there was a very convenient compromise; the king's conscience, like that of David's under an accumulation of guilt of another kind, was quietly at repose. No! it was a crime of greater horror and more worthy of condign punishment than any here enumerated; it was "the preference given to philosophy over the antique worship of his ancestors so dear to St. Lewis;" that "insolent philosophy, which had seduced and precipitated him into an abyss of evils."

Without presuming to become the apologist of insolent philosophy, or put it in competition with the antique worship so dear to St. Lewis, we may venture to doubt whether philosophy, even stript of its insolence, could with any absolving remedy, with any oblivious antidote, administer to a mind thus diseased; and the king in this instance did not act unwisely in cleaving to the accomodating faith of his

fathers, which offers such sources of consolation.

It is with peculiar propriety, also, that the king, under the influence of those catholic feelings, drags this insolent culprit before the sacred tribunal of an anticonstitutional Ambrose, the prism of whose faith, as the king informs us, had the happy faculty of dissecting whatever scanty virtues philosophy might possess, into strong resemblances of vice; virtues which the prismatic fathers of the church, with more appearance of candor, had dignified with the title of "splendid sins." At the feet of this courtly prelate, unmeet successor of the archbishop of Milan, let us leave the modern Theodosius, unwilling by invidious contrasts to mock the comparison which is made with so much complacency. We cannot help, however, expressing our regret, that the faith of his fathers served the unhappy monarch in no better stead, and that, in spite of the bitterness of his invective,

he had not placed a wider interval between himself and these courtly confessors, and attached himself more closely, under the auspices of the venerable Malesherbes, to the observance of the maxims of this insolent philosophy.

LETTRE XLII.

A M. de Bouillé.

3 Juillet, 1791.

Vous avez fait votre devoir, monsieur, cessez de vous accuser. Cependant je conçois votre affliction; vous avez tout osé pour moi, et vous n'avez pas réussi. Le destin s'est opposé à mes projets et aux vôtres; de fatales circonstances ont paralysé ma volonté, votre courage, et ont rendu nuls vos préparatifs. Je ne murmure point contre la Providence; je sais que le succès dépendoit de moi, mais il faut une ame atroce pour verser le sang de ses sujets, pour opposer une résistance, et amener la guerre civile en France. Toutes ces idées ont déchiré mon cœur; toutes mes belles résolutions

se sont évanouies. Pour réussir, il me falloit le cœur de Néron, et l'ame de Caligula. Recevez, M., mes remercîmens: que n'est-il en mon pouvoir de vous témoigner toute ma reconnoissance.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLII.

To M. de Bouillé.

July 3d, 1791.

You have done your duty, Sir; cease to accuse yourself, and yet I can conceive your affliction; you have risked every

thing for me, and have not succeeded. Destiny opposed my projects and yours; fatal circumstances palsied my will, your courage, and rendered null your preparations. I do not murmur against providence; success, I know, depended on myself, but he must have an atrocious mind who could have shed the blood of his subjects, and, by making resistance, cause a civil war in France. Those ideas rent my bosom, and all my resolutions vanished. To succeed, I must have had the heart of Nero, and the soul of Caligula. Receive, Sir, my thanks; why have I not power to testify to you all my gratitude?

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-SECOND LETTER.

Among the personages concerned in the king's evasion, M. de Bouillé appears to have acted a very principal part; and, by an unaccountable series of mistakes and blunders, to have been the cause of its failure. It appears from the king's answer, that this officer had been loud in his self-accusations. The king, with his usual benignity of disposition, pardons and consoles him by throwing the faults of the commander on the will of fate.

This letter presents the king in a still more amiable point of view, if it be true, that, at the hazard of a few lives, he could have attained the object of his wishes.

Were this point even doubtful, his aversion to the shedding of human blood in circumstances where he could have been easily justified, excites regret that so many virtues should be combined in the same character with so many errors.

Bouillé, in an impertinent, and somewhat silly letter to the national assembly, attempted to turn the indignation of the public from his royal master on himself. He missed his aim, inasmuch as his ill-judged menaces excited no other feeling in either the assembly or the people, but good humored laughter and contempt. It was, however, unfortunate for all parties that his projects were formed with so little address; for the greatest calamity that could have befallen the king or the country, was the failure of this plan, which had it succeeded, so far from causing a civil war as the king seemed to fear, would have united all parties

for the formation of a wiser constitution, and prevented the commission of those crimes which afterwards sullied the French revolution.

LETTRE XLIII.

A Monsieur.

23 Juillet, 1791.

Il faut donc encore que mon malheur pèse sur vous, et que vous soyez une victime de la fatalité qui me poursuit! Lorsque je cherchois un asile, le repos, l'honneur, et des François; je n'ai trouvé sur mes pas que la trahison, un abandon cruel, l'audace du crime, et la fatalité des circonstances. Plus d'espoir de ramener les François; plus de justification à espérer, de liberté à obtenir, de bien à faire, de plein gré, de mon propre mouvement. Il y a quelques jours que j'étois un vain fantôme de roi, le chef impuissant d'un peuple, tyran de son roi, et esclave de ses oppresseurs: aujour-

d'hui je partage ses fers, je suis prisonnier dans mon palais, je n'ai pas même le droit de me plaindre. Séparé de ma famille entière, mon épouse, ma sœur, mes enfans, gémissent loin de moi; et vous, mon frère, par le plus noble dévouement, vous vous êtes condamné à l'exil; vous voilà dans les lieux où gémissent tant de victimes que l'honneur appeloit sur les bords du Rhin, mais que mon amour pour eux, mes ordres, ou plutôt mes pressantes invitations, appeloient dans le sein de leur triste patrie. Ils sontmalheureux, dites-vous, oh! dites-leur que Louis, que leur roi, que leur père, que leur ami est plus malheureux encore! Cette fuite, qui m'étoit si nécessaire, qui devoit peut-être faire mon bonheur et celui du peuple, sera le motif d'une accusation terrible. Je suis menacé, j'entends les cris de la haine, on parle de m'interroger: non, jamais; tout le temps qu'il me sera permis de me croire roi de France, j'éviterai tout ce qui tendroit à m'avilir. Oh! mon frère, es-

pérons un plus doux avenir ! le François aimoit ses rois; qu'ai-je donc fait pour être haï, moi qui les ai toujours porté dans mon cœur? Si j'avois été un Néron, un Tibère.... qu'un doux espoir nous reste encore. Puisse la première lettre que je vous adresserai, vous apprendre que mon sort est changé.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLIII.

To Monsieur.

July 23d, 1791.

My misfortunes then must fall upon you, and you are doomed to be a new victim of that fatality, by which I am pursued.

While I sought an asylum, repose, honor and Frenchmen, I only found at every step treason, a cruel desertion, the boldness of crime, and the fatality of circumstances. All thoughts of regaining the French are over; no justification is to be hoped, no liberty to be obtained, no good to be effected from my own spontaneous will. A few days since I was a vain phantom of a monarch, the impotent chief of a people, the tyrant of their king, and the slave of their oppressors; I now share with them their chains. A prisoner in my palace, I am deprived even of the right of complaint. Separated from my whole family, my wife, my sister, my children, sigh at a distance from me, while you, my brother, by the most noble disinterestedness have condemned yourself to exile. You are now in those regions that echo the moans of so many victims, whom honor called to the banks of the Rhine, but whom my affection, my orders, or rather my earnest in-

treaties, sought to bring back to the bosom of their desolate country. You say they are unhappy; ah! tell them that Lewis, that their king, their father, their friend, is more unhappy still. This flight, which was so necessary for me, which would, perhaps, have procured my happiness and that of my people, will furnish motives for a terrible accusation. I am menaced; the cries of hatred strike my ear! They talk of interrogating me..... No, never! While I am suffered to believe myself king of France, I will avoid whatever would lead to degrade me. Oh, my brother! let us hope for a milder futurity; the French loved their kings; what then have I done to deserve their hatred, I, who have ever borne them in my heart. Were I a Nero, a Tiberius..... Let us still cherish a soothing hope, and may my next letter inform you that my fortune is changed.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-THIRD LETTER.

THE count of Provence was more fortunate than his royal brother. He had not M. de Bouillé to escort him to the frontiers, and therefore reached his destined place in safety. The picture which the king draws of his situation is affecting; but the catalogue of evils under which he was suffering, ends with one that contained, alas! more of truth than he meant to express; that he had unfortunately deprived himself even of the right to complain.

It must be admitted, that the assembly acted towards their fugitive king with unexampled, but fatal generosity. He had clearly violated the contract on his part,

and had pronounced, as it were, his own abdication. The assembly had decreed at the moment of the evasion, that the royal functions, and those of the executive power, were suspended in the hands of the king: they now decreed that his suspension should subsist till, the constitution being finished, the constitutional act should be presented to him. Having thus put the king in the case of doing no wrong, they decreed that he could not be arraigned for the wrong he had already done; but at the same time they added a few comminatory clauses to the constitution, the first of which enacted, that if the king, after having taken the oath to the constitution, retracted, he should be considered as having abdicated. All the various oaths which the king had taken being now virtually done away, and as he had forfeited all confidence, the assembly thought itself justified in guarding him more carefully than it had done before, and the

king might be considered as a kind of state prisoner till the constitution was finished, which was two months after his return; when, having again repeated the oaths to maintain and defend it, he was set at liberty.

Meanwhile, the Count of Provence increased the number of those who, according to the style of the king's letter, had gone to seek for honor on the banks of the Rhine. This emigration might have been pardoned in his younger brother, whose follies and extravagant projects at the beginning of the revolution had rendered him justly odious and contemptible to every class of Frenchmen; but Monsieur had been infected with no chivalrous maladies of this kind; on the contrary, his conduct had been generally irreproachable, and sometimes even liberal. His opinions since his flight have been conformable to those of his royal brother;

but previous to that event he had discovered a degree of moderation, which had it been shared by others of his race, the revolution would, perhaps, have ended more happily for the interest of his family, and the powers of Europe, who mingled themselves in the dispute.

LETTRE XLIV.

A Monsieur.

27 Octobre, 1791.

Le rapprochement dont vous m'entretenez, mon cher frère, est basé sur un prestige auquel je ne puis ajouter aucune croyance. Ce qui se passe sous mes yeux, me démontre que les principes qu'on puise dans la théorie de la politique, s'éclipsent dans l'exécution. D'ailleurs, comment combattre les sophismes et les prétentions des novateurs ? ..... La reine persévère dans son courage ; sa fermeté semble augmenter plus notre position devient accablante. Ce qui nous entoure me paroît bien foible pour lutter avec succès contre la tourbe de nos ennemis. Je ne

saurois trop vous engager à donner l'exemple de la circonspection. On épie des prétextes; il faut tâcher de paralyser, par notre prudence, les trames du crime.

Vous connoissez, mon cher frère, l'immuabilité de mes tendres sentimens pour vous.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLIV.

To Monsieur.

October 27th, 1791.

The approximation you suggest to me, my dear brother, is founded on an illusion

to which I can give no manner of credit. What passes before my eyes, demonstrates to me that principles, drawn from the theory of politics, vanish in the execution. Besides, what weapons can be used against the multiplied sophisms, employed to enforce the pretensions of innovators? The queen displays the same courage; her fortitude seems to augment in proportion as our situation becomes desperate. All that surrounds us appears to me very insufficient to contend successfully with the hordes of our enemies. I cannot engage you too strongly to shew an example of circumspection; pretexts are eagerly watched for, and we must endeavor by our prudence to neutralise the efforts of crime.— You know, my dear brother, the immutability of my tenderness for you.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-FOURTH LETTER.

This letter from the king supposes a plan of his brother for a coalition of parties in France favorable to the views of the court. The project was, perhaps, wise, and had such a coalition been formed on reasonable grounds, the constitution, deranged as it had been in the revision, might yet have gone on with prudent conductors. The detail of this project appears to the king not only difficult with respect to the general principle, but impracticable, since the means were wanting to carry any plan into execution. "All that surrounds us," says the king, "appears to me too feeble to struggle with success against the hordes

LETTRE XLV.

Au prince de Condé.

15 Août, 1791.

MON COUSIN,

EN VAIN j'ai témoigné à mes frères, combien tous ces rassemblemens, en armes, sur les bords du Rhin, étoient contraires à la saine politique, à l'intérêt des Français exilés, à ma propre cause. On veut toujours prendre l'offensive : on veut toujours nous menacer de l'étranger, et l'opposer aux Français égarés. Cette conduite me pénètre de douleur, et ne peut avoir que des funestes résultats. C'est perpétuer les haines, exciter le courroux; c'est, enfin, me priver de tous les moyens de conciliation. Dès l'instant que les hostilités auront commencé,

vous pouvez être assuré que le retour en France est impossible; l'émigration sera un crime d'Etat, et l'on voudra sévir contre des coupables, qui ne sont, aujourd'hui, que des victimes; et des Français qui furent obligés, par la violence, d'abandonner leur patrie, seront regardés comme des traîtres qui voulurent déchirer le sein de la France. Ces rassemblemens d'émigrés, qui jamais n'auront mon approbation, centuplent les forces de mes ennemis. Ceux-ci me croyent toujours l'ame de vos préparatifs; ils me supposent un conseil secret, sous le nom de comité *autrichien*, que dirige le génie de la reine, que ma volonté soutient, et qui vous retient sur les bords du Rhin. Ils crient aux armes, leurs agens bien endoctrinés se répandent dans les rues, dans les places publiques, sous les fenêtres de mon château; et tous les jours ils font retentir, à mes oreilles, ce cri funèbre: *la guerre! la guerre!* je suis épouvanté de leur ténacité, de leur fureur, de leurs cris de rage. Les

insensés! ils veulent la guerre: ah! si jamais le signal étoit donné, elle seroit longue et cruelle! Comme elle n'auroit d'autre objet que la vengeance et la haine, elle deviendroit barbare. O Dieu! préservez la France de ce funeste fléau; que ses hurlemens ne soient point entendus! S'il me faut descendre du trône, monter sur l'échafaud, où Charles I.er fut immolé; abandonner ce que j'ai de plus cher au monde, me voilà prêt; mais *point de guerre! point de guerre!* Cependant le bruit de vos préparatifs se fait entendre..... Mon cousin, vous qui désirez unir la gloire au devoir; vous que les émigrés regardent comme leur père et leur chef, et que j'estime, moi, comme prince loyal et magnanime; opposez-vous, je vous en conjure, aux projets insensés des Français réunis près de vous; faites-leur bien connoître tout le danger; opposez ma volonté, mes avis, mes prières mêmes à cette valeur, irritée par l'injustice, par le malheur, par l'injure. Osons espérer encore;

l'orage peut avoir un terme: des temps plus heureux peuvent s'offrir à nous. J'ai besoin de l'espérance, et d'apprendre que vous êtes dociles à ma voix, pour goûter un instant de bonheur.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLV.

To the prince of Condé.

August 15th, 1791.

In vain I have intimated to my brothers, how much those armed assemblies on the banks of the Rhine are contrary to sound

policy, the interest of the exiled French, and my own cause. They still persist in their resolutions of attack, threaten us with foreigners, and oppose them to Frenchmen led astray. This conduct fills me with sorrow, and must introduce the most disastrous consequences; it will perpetuate hatred, excite vengeance, and deprive me of all means of conciliation. The moment that hostilities begin, you may be assured that all return into France will be impossible, emigration will become a state-crime; those will then be attacked as criminals, who now are only victims; and Frenchmen, whom violence had forced to fly, will be considered as traitors who seek to lacerate the bosom of their country. This reunion of emigrants, which will never obtain my approbation, multiplies an hundred fold the forces of my enemies. They persist in considering me as the soul of your preparations; they imagine I have a secret council under the name of the Austrian

committee, directed by the genius of the queen, encouraged by my approbation, and who retain you on the banks of the Rhine.

They cry to arms; their agents, well instructed, spread themselves in the streets, in the public squares, under the windows of my palace, and every day they sound in my ear the funeral cry of war! war! I am affrighted at their tenacious obstinacy, their fury, their cries of rage. What madness! they wish for war! Ah! if ever the signal were given, it would be a long and cruel contest; having no other object than vengeance and hatred, it would become barbarous. Oh God! preserve France from this fatal scourge! let not those homicide yells be heard! If I must descend from the throne, mount the scaffold where Charles the first was immolated, and abandon all that is dear to me on earth, I am ready—but no war, no war!

Nevertheless the noise of your preparations has reached me ——— You, my cousin, who are desirous of uniting glory and duty; you, whom the emigrants consider as their father and their chief, and I myself esteem as a loyal and magnanimous prince; oppose, I conjure you, the wild projects of the French assembled around your person; make known to them the danger; oppose my will, my counsels, even my prayers, to this valor inflamed by injustice, misfortune, and injuries. Let us yet dare to hope; the storm may pass away, happier times may be in reserve for us. I stand in need of hope, and of learning that you are docile to my voice, in order to enjoy one moment of happiness.

LEWIS.

†

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-FIFTH LETTER.

Of the crowd "of victims that wandered in search of honor on the banks of the Rhine," the prince of Condé was, perhaps, the most chivalrous and enterprising. While his cousin, the count d'Artois, was attending the levee of sovereigns, and journeying, with fatal alacrity, from Pilnitz to Mantua, seeking the hostilities of foreign princes against his country in defiance of his brother's orders, both public and private, and most clearly in direct opposition to his interests; the prince of Condé was sharpening his sword to enter France at the head of his troops of emigrants, followed by the rest of indignant Europe, hastening to avenge the cause of kings.

On whatever other points doubts may be entertained of the sincerity of Lewis the sixteenth, his public declarations and his private injunctions furnish sufficient testimony, that at this moment he was sincere. He wisely judged that this armed emigration was contrary to sound policy as well as to the interests of the emigrants and his own cause. He foresaw the fatal results which must attend these acts of hostility, and warns the prince of the consequence, by a detail of the evils which his perverseness would bring on the cause he pretended to support. He conjures him to oppose his influence to the "mad designs" of his followers, to point out the danger which awaited them, to insist on his orders, to be the herald of his intreaties, to commiserate his situation, and respect his peace.....The prince of Condé remained inexorable. The conquest of France was an object too seducing to yield to considerations of this nature; and the magnanimity, the loyalty, and the glory with which the king compliments his cousin,

in order to flatter him into obedience, the prince deemed more chivalrously evinced by remaining what the king stiles him, the "father and chief" of emigrants.

Those assemblies of French beyond the frontiers had given great and just cause of complaint to the nation, and severe laws had been enacted in the legislative assembly against those presumed conspirators, which decrees the king had, nevertheless, refused to sanction. This refusal excited the indignation of the legislature; since, though the danger was not imminent, the menace was insulting; nor could the keeper of the seals, who was the bearer of the veto at the bar of the assembly, convince the members, (notwithstanding the physical precaution of taking libations of water, recorded by his colleague M. Bertrand, to insure coolness in the discussion), that temporising on this subjet was either prudent or constitutional. The answer of the prince of Condé to this supplicatory letter does not

appear; but it seems that the courage and daringness of these emigrant princes of the house of Bourbon increased in the exact ratio of the dangers and difficulties into which they plunged Lewis the sixteenth.

The king, after refusing his sanction to the severe laws enacted against the emigrants, wrote to both his brothers in terms the most impressive, to represent the evils attending their absence, and to command their return. These letters were delivered to their address at Coblentz, by the French ambassador. The answer from both forms a singular model of affectation and insensibility. Under pretence that their titles had been omitted, both assured the king that they had hesitated to open his letters; and, persuaded that he was still in moral and physical captivity at Paris, both declared that they would pay respect neither to his intreaties nor his orders. Louis Stanislas Xavier was dissatisfied that his brother had not called him *Monsieur*, and

Charles Philippe that the king had not called him *brother*. Thus sported those idle personages with the feelings and situation of the unhappy monarch, till they succeeded in carrying into execution their hostile purposes against France, which ended, as was predicted by the king, in the total defeat of all their hopes, after causing the overthrow of the throne of which they affected to appear the bulwark, and bringing the unhappy victim of their petulance and obstinacy to the scaffold.

LETTRE XLVI.

A M. de St.-Priest.

27 Novembre, 1791.

Toutes les mesures, monsieur, qui peuvent allumer une guerre civile, ne sont point celles que j'adopterai pour conserver mon autorité; j'abdiquerois plus volontiers le trône, que de livrer quelques places aux puissances, qui veulent me donner des preuves de leur haut intérêt. J'ai accepté, non sans beaucoup de répugnance, la nouvelle constitution; mais je suis décidé à la maintenir, parce que j'en ai fait le serment. La loyauté de mes principes peut seule justifier la confiance des Français. Mes frères, en s'obstinant à suivre le plan qu'ils semblent avoir adopté, me préparent bien

de chagrins, et se ferment, peut-être pour toujours, les moyens de m'en consoler. Usez, monsieur, de l'ascendant de votre esprit, pour leur faire connoître l'horrible position dans laquelle je me trouve. Leur retour ramèneroit sûrement l'union dans cette grande famille, dont je me plais tant à me regarder comme le père.

En rendant justice à vos offres généreuses, monsieur, et au zèle pur qui les dirige, je ne puis, dans le moment actuel, rien accepter, et encore moins me compromettre par des promesses, dont on me feroit un crime. Comptez, monsieur, autant sur ma bienveillance, que sur le désir que j'ai de vous en donner des preuves.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLVI.

To M. de St. Priest.

Nov. 27th, 1791.

The measures, Sir, that may kindle civil war, are not those which I will adopt to preserve my authority. I would rather abdicate the throne than deliver up any fortified place to the powers, who propose giving me proofs of their high interest. I have accepted, not without much repugnance, the new constitution, but I am resolved to maintain it, because I have sworn to do so. The loyalty of my principles can alone justify the confidence of the French people. My brothers, by obsti-

nately pursuing the plan they seem to have adopted, are preparing many sorrows for me, and depriving themselves, perhaps for ever, of all means of conciliation. Employ, Sir, your powers of persuasion to make them conceive the horror of my situation. Their return would surely lead to union in that great family, of which the title of father is so dear to me.

I appreciate your generous offers, Sir, and the pure zeal by which they are dictated; but at this moment I can accept nothing, and still less commit myself by promises which would be considered as crimes. Depend, Sir, alike on my good wishes, and the desire I feel to realise them.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-SIXTH LETTER.

It has already been observed that the king, into whatever trials or perplexities he was thrown, however strongly impelled by others to violent, or what were called energetic measures, felt always a salutary horror at risking the lives of men. This letter to M. St. Priest is an answer to two modest propositions which the minister had made him; the resource of civil war was an old project, but the delivery of the frontier towns in trust to powers, who were anxious to give him proofs of their high interest, had the merit of diplomatic novelty. The king's answer on both those points is decided and loyal.

Far from paying attention to these proposals made by M. St. Priest, the king, on the contrary, urges the minister to use his influence in an inverse direction, and prevail on his brothers to abandon projects, which he is assured, and in which he was not mistaken, were adapted to bring numberless evils on his head. He pleads the horror of his situation; he represents in pathetic terms the happiness which would result from their obedience to his orders. "Their return," says he, "would surely restore union to this great family, of which I am so delighted in considering myself as the father." This fraternal appeal to their sensibility would not have been understood by the brothers, ardent as they were for glory, and it is very doubtful if the minister was prompt in using his influence to excite in them those sentiments.

LETTRE XLVII.

A M. de N . . . .

23 Décembre, 1791.

Les deux partis opposés qui règnent dans l'assemblée législative, et qui se sont formés, pour ainsi dire, le jour de son installation, vous effrayent et vous ont obligé d'écouter les propositions qui vous ont été faites, et dont vous me parlez dans votre dernière lettre, datée de votre maison, à..... Comme vous, je suis réellement effrayé de cette opposition: la haine et l'envie la dirigent. Je vois des maux incalculables naître de cette lutte nouvelle, et j'ai tout lieu de présumer que je serai la première victime des débats scandaleux qu'elle fera naître. On vous a proposé de me lier au parti le

plus violent et le plus audacieux, en prenant dans son sein, ou d'après sa présentation, les ministres qui doivent être mon conseil, et de ne placer que des hommes de leur caractère, dans les places qui sont à ma nomination. Tous ces gens-là me plaisent peu, et je ne puis choisir parmi eux. La constitution est là, qui doit me servir de guide; je ne puis ni ne dois m'en écarter, et soyez persuadé que je chercherai les hommes qui peuvent m'être utiles, parmi ceux qui aiment et veulent défendre cette constitution. Ceux qui m'ont été désignés dans votre lettre, ne sont pas de mon goût; ils n'ont, pour tout mérite, que l'audace du crime; ils ont tous une arrière-pensée, qui toujours sera subordonnée aux événemens; et je les crois encore plus attachés à quelques chefs adroits et déguisés, qu'à la constitution dont ils feignent vouloir prendre la défense. Il y a encore parmi eux des beaux parleurs, mais gens sans tenue, sans génie, incapables d'agir. Condor-

cet a la tête farcie de démonstrations de problêmes. Ce n'est pas de la théorie qu'il nous faut, c'est une expérience active. Vergniaud n'est pas assez froid pour le cabinet. S — fourbe et mal-adroit. L — d'une franchise rebutante; il croit donner des conseils, et vous dit de grosses injures, assaisonnées de patriotisme. Je ne choisirai point mes ministres parmi ces hommes-là. Il me faut des hommes prudens, assez généreux pour se sacrifier; attachés par devoir et par honneur au nouvel ordre de choses, et qui m'aiment assez pour daigner s'intéresser encore à moi. Vous voyez bien qu'il m'est impossible de faire un choix parmi les êtres qui me sont présentés par le parti dont la puissance vous effraye. Voyons si je pourrai le vaincre en lui opposant les vrais amis de la constitution. Adieu.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLVII.

To M. de N . . . .

December 23d, 1791.

The two opposite parties that divide the legislative assembly, and which were formed almost on the day of its installation, excite your apprehensions, and have led you to listen to the propositions which have been made to you, and which you mention in your last letter to me, dated from your house at — -- Like you, I am really affrighted at this opposition, directed by envy and hatred. I see innumerable evils springing from this new struggle, and have every reason to presume that I shall

be the first victim of the scandalous dissentions it will produce. A proposal has been made to you that I should connect myself with the most violent and most daring party, by choosing among its members, or receiving from its hands the ministers who compose my council; and by placing only men of the same stamp, wherever I have the nomination. I am little pleased with any of those men, and cannot choose amongst them. The constitution exists, and should be my guide, from which I neither can nor ought to deviate; and be assured, I will seek the men for whom I have occasion, among those who love and will defend the constitution. The persons indicated in your letter, are not at all to my taste; their whole merit consists in the boldness of crime; they have all a lurking sentiment which will be made subservient to events; and I believe they are more attached to dexterous and disguised

chiefs, than to the constitution, which they affect to defend. There are among them some fine speakers, but men without conduct or genius, and incapable of acting. Condorcet has his head stuffed with demonstrations and problems, and it is not theory of which we stand in need, but active experience. Vergniaud has not sufficient coolness for the cabinet; S..... is a knave, and awkward; L..... is disgustingly forward, and imagines he is delivering oracles while he deals out gross abuse, seasoned with patriotism. I will not choose my ministers among such persons; I stand in need of men of prudence; generous enough to make a sacrifice of themselves; attached by duty and honor to the new order of things; and who love me sufficiently to deign still to interest themselves in my fate. You see plainly that it is impossible for me to choose among the persons presented to me by the party, whose power

you dread. Let us see if I can subdue them by opposing to them the real friends of the constitution.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

One of the greatest faults which the constituent assembly committed, was the self-denial by which it refused to its members a seat in the succeeding legislative body. The necessary consequence of this act of impolicy was the introduction of characters into the senate of the nation, who had been active and useful in pushing at the wheel

of the revolution, but who, from their habits and incapacity as well as from their violence, were altogether unfitted to direct its march. Among those representatives, however, there were men of as splendid talents and deep research as any that had distinguished themselves in the constituent assembly; and perhaps no names in the first legislature had an higher claim to celebrity, than the two which are mentioned in this letter, Condorcet and Vergniaud.

The great majority of the new legislature were decided friends to the constitution, and perhaps men more royally than democratically inclined; but almost all had apprehensions, that the executive power was much less favorably disposed to the new system than themselves; and this idea was not unreasonable, when it was perceived of what heterogenous elements the agents of the executive power were composed. The king was not blind to the error which he

had committed in the nomination of individuals to the important and difficult office of ministers, in whom the nation could place no confidence. Honest and upright men ought, indeed, to withstand the clamors of the multitude; but the pertinacity with which some of this ministerial band adhered to their places while they affected to have it understood, what they have since avowed, that the constitution which they were appointed to direct was the object of their abhorrence, could not but excite mistrust in a popular body, whose opinion in favor of liberty and the revolution were perhaps already raised too high.

The king "had accepted the constitution with repugnance," and some suspicions might reasonably light on his intentions, which the choice he had made of his ministers did not tend to dissipate. This idea seems to have struck the king's correspondent M. de N....., who, it seems, had been

negociating with that party in the assembly; which Lewis the sixteenth terms the most violent and daring, respecting the choice of ministers, in place of those which the king had chosen for himself. M. de N.... had proceeded so far in his negociation as to designate certain persons, whose whole merit, according to his majesty, was only the audaciousness of crime. As we are ignorant of the names designated in M. de N...'s letter, we must take the king's opinion on trust; perhaps it was well founded, for such persons there undoubtedly were. A slight exception is made, however, by the king, in favor of Condorcet and Vergniaud. "There are also among them, fine orators, but men without conduct, without genius, and incapable of acting;" this opinion, applied to these celebrated men, appears somewhat hazarded; one is too theoretical, and one too enterprising; as to the other two we leave their names in obscurity; the

greatest favor we can, perhaps, confer on their reputation.

But it was not only Condorcet's want of experience, and Vergniaud's want of coolness, that displeased the king; he had a general antipathy to the whole. "All these people displease me, and I cannot choose amongst them." The king was right in invoking the constitution, which forbade such choice among the members of the legislative body; but he was surely wrong in hesitating to look for men who *loved* and were anxious to defend it. "We have sworn neither of us to love or approve the constitution, but to execute it;" says one of those ministers in a debate with his colleague: the distinction was just, but it would have been wiser in the king to have chosen ministers whose love and obedience were more in unison.

LETTRE XLVIII.

A M. Vergniaud.

29 Janvier, 1792.

VOTRE plan est sublime, monsieur; mais il n'est plus temps de feindre. Vous proposez, et je ne puis rien; je n'ai pas même le pouvoir de faire croire au désir que j'ai de faire le bien. Vous-même, monsieur, quand bien même je le voudrois, ne pouvez espérer aucun succès. Le crime veille, on conspire; la constitution doit succomber, et avec elle le fonctionnaire public qu'elle a créé. Vous avez des idées grandes et libéralles, mais votre gouvernement mixte ne peut durer qu'un jour. Les novateurs n'ont aucun but; ils visent à la nouveauté, et ne s'attacheront jamais à rien; ils

détruiront toujours; ils renverseroient le lendemain la constitution qu'ils auroient établie, les fonctionnaires publics qu'ils auroient nommés; ils tendent à se détruire eux-mêmes. Il faut, monsieur, se rallier de bonne-foi à la constitution; elle a des imperfections, je l'avoue; mais dans un temps orageux, elle est une planche salutaire: sauvons ensemble, de bonne-foi, cette constitution.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLVIII.

To M. Vergniaud.

January 19th, 1793.

Your plan is sublime, Sir, but it is no longer time to feign. You make propositions, and I can perform nothing. I have not even the power of convincing the world that I have the desire of doing good. Yourself, Sir, even on the supposition that I consented, have no hope of success. Crimes and conspiracies are abroad; the constitution must fall, and with it the first public functionary whom it created. You have great and liberal ideas, but your mixed government can last only a day. The innovators have

no particular end in view; they aim at novelty; they will never attach themselves to any object, but are always for subversion. They would overthrow to-morrow the constitution they had established to-day, together with the public functionaries they had themselves named; they are working for their own destruction. We must, Sir, rally sincerely around the constitution, which perhaps is not free from imperfections, but may serve in stormy times as a salutary plank. Let us then unite our sincere efforts to save this constitution.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-EIGHTH LETTER.

THE prepossessions which the king had been led to entertain respecting the Gironde, notwithstanding the recommendations and good offices of M. de N....., would have prevented him from listening to any projects, however salutary to himself, or beneficial to the country. He acknowledges that the plan which Vergniaud presented to him was sublime, that he had great and liberal ideas; but all further experiments were too late; the constitution was about to fall, and bury the first public functionary in its ruins. Of this plan of Vergniaud we learn nothing from the letter, but that it was the king's opinion that it could not last beyond the day of its formation; and yet

if the king was duly persuaded that the present constitution was about to fall, and that he should perish with it; that the plan presented by Vergniaud was liberal and sublime, and that the party to which he belonged had the ascendancy at that time, which was the case, the king would not have acted unwisely, notwithstanding the common place exclamations about innovators, and crime, and destruction, in paying more attention to M. de N....'s recommendation, and in taking his ministers from amongst that party to whose talents he pays so just an eulogium.

What is a little singular in this letter is the real or apparent exchange of characters in the writer and his correspondent. Six months had scarcely elapsed from the time that the king, in a moment of sincerity, left behind him a most detailed satire on this constitution, which he now clings to as the conservatory plank in the storm, crying

continually, the constitution, the constitution; let us be earnest in saving the constitution! Vergniaud, but lately characterised as one of the innovators, by which were meant the Jacobin or republican party, presents him a plan of mixed government, in which, from the approbation bestowed on it by the king, jacobinism could have little share. It was unhappy for both that no better understanding took place between them. Of the talents of Vergniaud it is unnecessary to speak; but he had in his mind and manners a sort of simplicity, what the French term *bonhomie*, which made us always forget the splendor of his abilities. No man ever appeared to me so remote from all ideas of intrigue; he was too careless to form any combination in which there was a secret to be observed. He was much less fitted for the cabinet than the senate, not for want of coolness, as the king has stated in his former letter, but from ha-

bitual indolence. Lewis the sixteenth might, perhaps, have acted wisely in accepting his proposition, and if he had known the man he would have sought his friendship.

LETTRE XLIX.

A M. de N . . . .

27 Janvier, 1792.

Il y a quelques mois que vous étiez épouvanté. J'ai refusé les protégés de ceux qui vous faisoient peur; ils renouvellent leur propositions, mais d'une manière plus énergique. Ils ont une volonté, ils veulent bien ordonner. J'ai reçu leurs propositions et leurs envoyés avec la même froideur, et ne leur ai laissé aucun espoir. J'ai reçu une lettre d'un nommé Rouyer, député. Vous la lirez chez moi; c'est le comble du délire. Ce monsieur me promet le bonheur, l'amour des Français, un règne long et glorieux, si je fais tout ce qu'il veut bien me conseiller. En vérité, je suis indigné. Ces gens-là me

forceront à les fuir. Je serois porté à les haïr, s'ils n'étoient déjà un objet de ma pitié. Venez de bonne heure au château, vous lirez cette lettre, et je vous parlerai de quelque projet.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER XLIX.

To M. de N . . . .

January 27th, 1792.

Some months past you were in consternation when I rejected the persons, protected by those who caused your apprehensions. They now renew their propositions

tions in a more peremptory manner; they have a will of their own, and are pleased to issue their commands. I received their propositions and messengers with the same coldness, and have left them no further hope. I have received a letter from a certain deputy of the name of Rouyer, which you shall read with me; it is the very height of madness. This gentleman promises me happiness, the love of the French, and a long and glorious reign, provided I follow all the advice which he has the goodness to give me. In truth I am filled with indignation; those men will force me to fly from them, and I should be inclined to hate them, if they were not already objects of my contempt. Come early to the palace, you shall read the letter, and I will mention to you a certain project.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FORTY-NINTH LETTER.

M. de N....., to whom these letters are addressed, in this correspondence appears to be the only person who has a salutary dread of the situation in which the king was placed. The king rallies his correspondent with respect to his apprehensions, and tells him, with an air of triumph, how he has put to the door those who a few months since had given him, that is, M. de N....., a fright. "I have received," says the king, "their propositions with the same coolness, and have left them no hopes;" ..... left them no hopes!

The circumstance which at this moment raises the king's spirits into a kind of vic-

torious exultation, is a letter which he had received from one Rouyer, a deputy, who had promised him the return of the golden age, if he would hearken to his advice. The king invites M. de N..... to come and read it, and concludes this invitation by a commentary, in which he makes his confession of faith respecting the popular part of the assembly in general, for whom he should feel the most cordial hatred, if his habitual benevolence did not lead him to pity.

The letter of M. Rouyer, which is urged by the king as an argument of considerable force against any further attempts on the part of M. de N..... to influence the royal will in favor of the popular party, is no doubt silly enough, and fitted to extort a smile from the most cynical. But after indulging this harmless pleasantry at Mons. Rouyer's expence, there is another party,

in this scene of amusement which calls for a different style of animadversion.

It is clear from the history of this epocha, that no elements of social organisation were ever so inharmoniously linked together as the court, and the legislative body. The king had occasionally just sentiments of his situation, and felt the necessity of composing with the spirit of the times. From his correspondence with M. de N....., it appears that an understanding with the popular party had been the subject of discussion, and the zeal of this negociator is sufficiently acceptable to be marked with royal gratitude.

But whatever dispositions the king might have felt to accede to the wishes of M. de N....., however prudent he might have deemed an occasional aberration from the politics of the Tuilleries to those of the Manege, there was always some incident,

some impediment, that stepped in between the intention and the act; some malignant genius that crossed his way, and turned him from the path of duty.

If in reading this correspondence we are compelled to praise the king for the resistance he made against numerous temptations to evil, we should not be less candid towards him, could we discover all the snares which surrounded him when he yielded. An example of this kind occurs in the letter before us. The king was naturally prepossessed against the popular party in the legislative body; but this prepossession would have yielded to more mature examination, had not those around him been interested in exasperating his feelings, already too much irritated, and throwing thicker mists before him the nearer he approached the precipice. No doubt many of the king's advisers were sincere in their counsels; their errors might be pardoned

in favor of their early prejudices; but there were others, of more ignoble kind, who had neither the prejudices of birth or rank to plead, whose principal occupation it was, if we may give credit to their own assertions, to keep the king's mind in a proper state of indisposition against every wise and liberal counsel, which those who were really concerned for his own peace, and the good of his country, were anxious to impress on his mind.

Such wise counsel M. de N..... had been solicitous to impart, but the king remained obdurate to all his representations. The propositions of the popular party were received with coolness, and their messengers dismissed and cut off from all hope. Of this event the king informs his correspondent, and, to prove the justice of his sentence, invites him to read M. Rouyer's letter. Now if M. Rouyer had been a leader of that party, or even an accredited instru-

ment, and not an obscure individual, whose name was scarcely ever heard or mentioned, some allowance might be made for the king's bitterness against the arrogance of the writer, and the pretensions of the party whom he was supposed to represent. The party, meanwhile, were totally removed from any knowledge of M. Rouyer, or his letter; this letter was one of the Carnival tricks of M. Bertrand de Molleville, then minister of the marine, who, as he himself tells the story, urged M. Esm . . . . . to write this letter for Rouyer, who appears to have been himself incapable of reaching its verbose extravagance. When at M. Bertrand's suggestion this letter was written, the king is made the dupe of this puerile and contemptible stratagem, known in France by the name of *mystification*, the tendency of which was to render the popular party still more obnoxious to the court. While Lewis the sixteenth was corresponding with M. de N..., who negociated in favor of the popular

party, M. Bertrand informs us, that he employed another M. de N..... to negociate with the party of the Feuillants, and that he had attached this negociator to his department, as he had the advantage of being particularly connected with the royalist party. M. Bertrand's negociator, M. de N....., has at least one point of resemblance with M. de N..... the king's correspondent: both end in doing nothing. If the historian had not pledged his faith for the verity of his facts, we should suspect some error in this part of his story, and that the king's negociator and the minister's were one and the same person. Of the part the king had in this transaction, so far as respects the negociation with the popular party, there can be no doubt. With respect to the minister of the marine, he could have employed his time more usefully for his country, and much more advantageously to the king's interest, had he been less a *mystifier*,

or had he attended more closely to his professional duties.

It is not difficult, after perusing M. Bertrand's annals, to account for the speedy decline of the monarchy; surrounded by such agents, a more cautious king than Lewis might have fallen as rapidly. But what appears most singular in this history, is the candid manner in which M. Bertrand avows the active part he took as the king's friend, in hastening this catastrophe. If his book be not the most envenomed libel, it is the most complete and unanswerable act of accusation that has ever been drawn up against the court.

LETTRE L.

A M. Péthion, maire de Paris.

14 Février, 1792.

L'INVARIABILITÉ des intentions que je n'ai cessé de démontrer, monsieur, pour alléguer la partie du peuple qui souffre le plus dans ce moment, doit être garant de l'empressement que je mettrai toujours à seconder de tout mon pouvoir la représentation nationale. J'approuve, en son entier, tout ce que vous m'avez proposé de faire dans le mémoire que vous m'avez remis. Vous voudrez bien, d'après cela, faire distribuer, avec une sage répartition, les fonds que j'ai ordonné qu'on mît à votre disposition.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER L.

To M. Pèthion, Mayor of Paris.

February 14th, 1792.

Invariable in the intention which I have never ceased to display, Sir, of relieving that portion of the people who suffer most at this period, I trust that this disposition will be considered as a sure pledge of the alacrity with which I shall on every occasion second the national representation to the utmost of my power. I approve every article of the memorial you have sent me.

You will be pleased in consequence to distribute with discernment, the funds which I have ordered to be placed at your disposition.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTIETH LETTER.

THERE is nothing to be remarked in this letter to the mayor of Paris for the distribution of necessaries to the poor, except that it furnishes a new instance of that benevolence, which formed a prevailing part of the king's character.

LETTRE LI.

A Madame Adélaïde.

15 Mars, 1792.

La douce habitude que j'avois de vous voir, ma chère tante, me rend bien pénible la distance qui nous sépare. Dans toute autre circonstances que celles où nous sommes, je partagerois le plaisir que vous éprouveriez, d'habiter le pays où ont vécu les plus grands hommes de l'antiquité. Rome et l'Italie rappellent des si grands souvenirs, qu'on n'y peut faire un pas sans y trouver les traces des maîtres du monde.

Je juge, d'après ce que vous m'écrivez, que vous avez vu, avec un sage discernement, les beautés anciennes et modernes

que renferme la patrie des Cæsar: vous en parlez avec cet enthousiasme que l'amour des beaux arts inspire. J'ai remercié et fait remercier le Saint-Père de ses prévenances obligeantes, et des attentions délicates qu'il a pour vous. J'espère que, lorsque nous nous reverrons, vous me donnerez le journal de votre voyage.

Ma position est toujours empirant; le présent est douloureux, et l'avenir est peut-être pire. A travers cette obscurité, il seroit bien difficile de prévoir les suites de l'explosion qui me menace. M. de la Fayette n'a point changé depuis votre départ. Son ambition égale sa fausseté, et sa fausseté son ingratitude. La reine prétend que dans le siècle de la chevalerie il eût été déclaré déloyal et traître; moi, je trouve qu'il agit comme il pense, et qu'il pense comme il agit.

MM. de Brissac, de Chabot, et le duc de Mailly nous voyent souvent; nous par-

lons de vous. La reine ne se porte pas très-bien; mes enfans, au contraire, jouissent de la meilleure santé; ma sœur auroit besoin de prendre un peu plus d'exercice; mais nous n'avons pas même le droit de nous promener, jugez-en du reste.

Adieu, ma chère tante, aimez celui qui vous est si tendrement dévoué.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LI.

To Madame Adélaïde.

March 15th, 1792.

The soothing habit I had of seeing you, my dear aunt, renders extremely painful

to me the distance that separates us. In other circumstances than those in which we are placed, I should participate the pleasure you feel at inhabiting a country, where the greatest men of antiquity have lived. Rome and Italy awaken such sublime recollections, that at every step we find traces of the masters of the world.

I perceive, from your letter, that you have viewed with a discerning eye the ancient and modern beauties, displayed in the country of the Cesars. You speak of those beauties with that enthusiasm, which the love of the fine arts inspires. I have thanked the holy father, and caused him to be thanked for his obliging kindness and delicate attention towards you. I hope when we meet you will give me the journal of your travels.

My situation changes for the worse; the present is painful, and the future is, perhaps,

haps, more cruel. Amidst this obscurity, it would be difficult to foresee the consequences of the explosion with which I am menaced. M. de La Fayette is not changed since your departure; his ambition equals his falsehood, and his falsehood his ingratitude. The queen asserts, that in the ages of chivalry he would have been pronounced a disloyal traitor; for myself, it appears to me that he acts as he thinks, and thinks as he acts.

Mess. de Brissac, de Chabot, and Marshall de Mailly see us often, and we talk of you. The queen is not very well, but my children enjoy excellent health; my sister stands in need of more exercise, but we have not even the privilege of taking a walk; you may judge of the rest.

Adieu, my dear Aunt; love him who is so tenderly devoted to you.

LEWIS.

LETTRE LII.

A Mesdames.

25 Mars, 1792.

Nous avons supporté avec peine, mes chères tantes, votre éloignement; mais il étoit nécessaire à votre tranquillité, et à votre bonheur: il n'en a pas moins fallu pour me priver des consolations que j'étois sûr de trouver dans votre tendresse pour moi. Fixées dans la capitale du monde chrétien, vous jouissez, dans toute leur pureté, des bienfaits de la religion; offrez pour moi, au roi des rois, vos ardentes prières; que le ciel irrité s'appaise, qu'il rende à la France ses beaux jours, aux Français la confiance qu'ils me doivent; et que, du sein des discordes, le bonheur renaisse; alors je dirai, j'ai assez vécu.

Vos dernières lettres me sont parvenues dix jours plus tard qu'à l'ordinaire; c'est une suite du désordre qui existe dans les postes. Lorsque tout est désorganisé, les correspondances ne sont pas plus sûres que la marche des événemens.

Mes enfans sont languissans; la reine trouve la permanence de sa santé dans son ame, et moi dans ma résignation aux décrets de la Providence.

Adieu, mes chères tantes, la distance qui nous sépare n'a aucun droit sur ma tendre affection pour vous.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LII.

A Mesdames.

March 25th, 1792.

We have borne, my dear aunts, with pain your removal, but it was necessary for your tranquillity and happiness, and nothing less was requisite to lead me to deprive myself of the consolations I should have been sure of finding in your tenderness.

Established in the capital of the Christian world, you enjoy the blessings of religion in all their purity. Offer up for me your ardent prayers to the king of kings, that

the wrath of heaven may be appeased; that it may restore to France its happier days, to the French the confidence to which I have a claim, and that from the midst of discord happiness may arise : I shall then have lived enough.

Your last letter reached me ten days later than usual, in consequence of the disorder which prevails in the service of the posts. When every thing is disorganised, the intercourse of letters is as uncertain as the progress of events.

My children are in a languishing state; the queen finds the continuance of her health in the fortitude of her spirit, and I in my resignation to the decrees of Providence.

Farewell, my dear aunts; the distance which separates us, has no influence on my tender affection for you.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-FIRST AND FIFTY-SECOND LETTER.

From the savage turbulence of revolutions, and the perplexing intricacies of politics, we turn to those effusions of tenderness, the mild charities of domestic life, with the same pleasure as we view the father of Epic poetry leading the footsteps of his divinities from the field of battle, towards the happy abodes of the innocent Ethiopians.

The king had ever been unremitting in his attentions towards those elder branches of his house, having probably found a refuge in the society of his aunts, from the levity and dissipation which marred in earlier life his own domestic enjoyments. This is what he calls the soothing habit which he had of seeing them, and of which he feels more

sensibly the loss, in contrasting those moments of social intercourse with the anxious and cruel inquietudes which now weighed heavily on his heart.

The only remarkable passage in these letters, is the sentence which the king and queen pass on M. de La Fayette. The queen pretends, that had he lived in the days of chivalry, he would have been declared a false and disloyal knight; while the king, who accuses him of ambition, perfidy, and ingratitude, is of opinion, also, that "he acts as he thinks, and thinks as he acts;" the queen's opinion respecting him is tolerably clear, but the king's observation is more obscure.

As there is no character more prominent on the stage of the French revolution, than that of M. de La Fayette's, so there are few on whom more praise has been bestowed, or more blame been laid. He has been honored with the title of hero of both worlds; and if to have been the first among the Europeans

who drew his sword for the liberties of America, and the most active, in the opening of the French revolution, to secure those of his own country, be marks of heroism, he has certainly high claims to that distinguished title. He is accused by the king, of ambition, perfidy, and ingratitude; but of some of those crimes, and nearly at the same epocha, he was also accused by the party which was active in the subversion of the court. These contradictions, apparently so difficult of solution, are resolved, perhaps without design, by the king himself, when he states that M. de La Fayette "thinks as he acts, and acts as he thinks;" that is, that he had formed an opinion of his own, which he followed in perfect independence of the opinion of others.

But whatever blame may be ascribed to any part of M. de La Fayette's conduct, and who in such an arduous task could hope to escape censure, no one can rob him of the honor of having first promulgated in his own

country the sacred and undisputed axioms which formed the basis of the revolution, and of having suffered nobly in its cause. With respect to the queen's accusation, it may be observed, that M. de La Fayette never having sworn fealty or homage to any other divinity than liberty, and having never professed to wear one of those ten thousand swords that at the smile or frown of beauty were to leap from their scabbards, the charge of disloyalty is unlawfully imputed. He served the queen's cause as long, perhaps longer, than he ought to have served it; but his attachment to liberty, founded on the most elevated and noble principles, appears throughout the whole of his conduct to have been the business and the habit of his life.*

* There are certain traits which develope characters better than the most elaborate disquisitions. A single fact is sometimes more illustrative than a whole host of opinions. In M. Felix Faulcon's Historical, Political, and Legislative Fragments, we meet with the following anecdote respecting M. de La Fayette. It is con-

signed in a letter, written to that legislator by M. Bureau de Pusy, from the dungeons of Olmutz.

"The commander of Wesel, where we were then detained, came and read to M. de La Fayette a letter from his master; the letter stated, that if the general had any plan to propose against France, such communication might tend to soften his lot.—M. de La Fayette starting up with vivacity and indignation; "I — plans against France!" — said he, "I, make common cause with the coalesced powers to destroy the liberty of my country! this is somewhat too impertinent." — The bearer of the message was thunderstruck at the epithet, and thought it his duty to observe, that these expressions were from a crowned head. — "Since I have lived," replied M. de La Fayette, "I call things by their name; and though I am the prisoner of a king, it is no motive for me to permit him an impertinence."

"What affecting sublimity," continues M. Falcon, "in what I have just copied! — Celestial liberty, how divine art thou when thus beholden! How much thou ennoblest the soul that is worthy of thee!" It is a duty to record, that the two most intrepid defenders of those victims of royal and imperial despotism, were general Fitzpatrick in England, and M. Felix Falcon in France.

LETTRE LIII.

A M. de N....

4 Mars, 1792.

Je respecte beaucoup l'opinion publique, mais je la crois mal dirigée. Vous voudriez que j'essaye encore de la philosophie et de ses agens; vous voudriez que j'appelle dans mon conseil M. de Condorcet. Ce n'est point avec des philosophes comme M. de Condorcet, que les hommes qui gouvernent pourront maintenir un grand peuple sous le joug des lois protectrices, sanctionnées par les siècles. Votre philosophe géomètre manque, comme les métaphysiciens, le compas de cette expérience qui guide les hommes qui gouvernent, et dont ils ont besoin; leur théorie est nulle, ils peuvent

capter la faveur populaire, mais ils ne peuvent rien au-delà. J'ai bien acquis, monsieur, le droit de me défier de tous ces hommes nouveaux, avides de pouvoirs, et impatiens de jouer un grand rôle. Le vertige dont quelques têtes marquantes de l'assemblée sont atteints, ne me forcera pas à transiger avec mon devoir, et à faire des mauvais choix. Je n'en suis pas moins touché, monsieur, de tout ce que votre attachement pour ma personne vous a dicté. Je ne verrai pas M. de Condorcet, ni M. Péthion, parce que je ne pourrois le faire de la manière proposée, sans me compromettre. C'est vous donner une nouvelle preuve de mon estime, monsieur, que de vous prier d'être l'interprête de mes intentions.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LIII.

To M. de N . . . .

March 4th, 1792.

I have a great respect for public opinion, but I consider it as having a wrong direction. You wish me to try once more philosophy and its agents, and express a desire that I should name M. Condorcet a member of my council; but it is not with philosophers, such as M. Condorcet, that men at the helm of government can maintain a great people under the yoke of salutary laws, sanctioned by ages. Your philosophical geometrician is destitute, as well as the metaphysicians, of the compass of that

experience, which guides men who govern, and which is necessary for their use. Their theory is null; they may captivate popular favor, but can do no more. I have purchased dearly enough, Sir, the right of mistrusting those new men, eager for power, and impatient to act a brilliant part. The vertigo which has seized some distinguished persons in the assembly, shall never compel me to tamper with my duty, and make a bad choice. I am not the less sensibly affected, Sir, by all which your attachment to my person has led you to suggest. I will not see M. Condorcet, or M. Pethion, because I cannot see them in the manner proposed without committing myself. I give you a new proof of my esteem, Sir, in begging you will be the interpreter of my intention.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-THIRD LETTER.

M. de N..... appears as indefatigable in urging the king to introduce philosophy and philosophers into the cabinet, as his majesty seems persevering and peremptory in rejecting both. It was a wretched service which the *habitués* of the court rendered to the king, in representing the persons thus recommended, as objects of suspicion and even contempt; and it might perhaps have been happier for himself, as well as his country, if instead of treating geometricians and metaphysicians with misprision, and their principles as vain abstractions, he had made an earlier trial of the compass of their experience, by which perhaps he might have steered clear of the

rocks, where he was so soon afterwards driven to make shipwreck.

This long negociation for a patriotic ministry met hitherto with too many obstacles to be attended with any success. The prejudice excited against the leaders of the popular party was as yet too potent to be subdued. Public opinion, the king admits, was with that party; but at this epocha, the voice of the people was not that of the Tuilleries. It seems that M. de N..... had given hints respecting interviews between the king and Pethion and Condorcet; but the king is fearful of committing himself if he sees them in the manner proposed—with respect to whom had he this evil to fear?—not the public, for the public voice he admits is with them. But as Johnson observed of Clarissa, that there was always something which she loved better than truth, so, alas! with all the king's professions of sincerity for liberty and the constitution, there was always, and this was natural enough, something that he preferred to either.

LETTRE LIV.

A Monsieur.

26 Avril, 1792.

Vous avez jugé avec beaucoup de sagacité, mon cher frère, les hommes qui occupent les différens ministères; mais il est plus aisé de les apprécier ce qu'ils valent, que de m'indiquer ceux qu'il faudroit choisir pour les remplacer. Dumourier est une tête effervescente dont l'esprit ne peut me servir à rien. Son ambition, et ses principes versatils prouvent, que les intrigans trouvent tôt ou tard l'occasion de se mettre en avant. Ce Dumourier est en général fort au-dessous de ce qu'il croit valoir. Pour M. de Narbonne, c'est un écervellé sans talent, qui toute sa vie n'a fait que des sottises, et

qui les a comblées en devenant le ministre de ceux qui ne veulent plus de roi. M. de Grave est une tête exaltée sans moyens. Le ministère de la guerre, sous ces trois hommes, a été un écho de discordance politique. Ils n'ont point su maintenir la discipline dans l'armée, ni eu l'esprit de s'en concilier l'estime. Les innovations que les circonstances y ont introduites, ont été l'œuvre de la médiocrité d'une part, et de cette timidité qui a enhardi les factieux. Quant à ce Roland, qu'on m'avoit vanté comme un sage qui devoit recommencer Sully, je n'ai trouvé en lui qu'un homme à système; son enveloppe de puritain, cache une ambition, toujours prête à se montrer; mais l'hypocrisie qui lui sert de masque, fait qu'il s'efforce de ne pas être deviné. Ce Roland a une femme de beaucoup d'esprit, qui préside à ses travaux de cabinet, et qui dirige son ministère. La reine voit avec horreur tous ces nouveaux visages; mais les Girondins, qui ont acquis dans ce mo-

ment une très-grande prépondérance, maîtrisent l'opinion publique. On distingue, dans cette députation, un avocat nommé Vergniaud; il a plus d'éloquence réelle que Mirabeau; il met moins d'importance dans ses manières, mais il a des pensées plus solides, et peut-être plus brillantes. On m'a assuré que ce n'est pas un méchant homme, mais c'est une tête du midi, qui a la faim de la célébrité, et qui a la manie de vouloir régénérer la France d'après l'antique Rome. Brissot en a aussi beaucoup dans la sphère où il plane; ainsi qu'un certain curé Grégoire, qui affiche le *philanthropisme*. Cet apôtre des Noirs crie tout haut contre la tyrannie, mais son crédit n'est que secondaire.

M. de Rivarol, dont les lumières me sont précieuses, et dont le zèle ne se rallentit point, me fit hier une proposition des plus singulières, et que tout autre que moi adopteroit sûrement. " J'ai médité, me di-

soit-il, votre position; j'ai pesé les chances qui étoient pour et contre vous; je crois connoître assez le caractère des Français, pour vous faire tirer parti de la folie du jour, d'une manière qui triplera votre puissance. Puisque les Jacobins ne veulent tout détruire que pour régner, allez hardiment à la société même, mettez sur votre tête royale le *bonnet rouge*, au nom duquel on commande, vous avez l'*aînesse* de l'autorité. L'étonnement, l'ivresse d'une démarche si extraordinaire, déjouera incontestablement toutes les menées criminelles de vos ennemis; elle vous *nationnalisera* et bâillonnera la tourbe des meneurs." Tel est en substance, mon cher frère, un des mille et un plans que le zèle de quelques amis de la monarchie me donne, pour lutter avec le monstre qui est à la veille de dévorer la France. Vous sentez que ma religion, mon honneur, la dignité de ma couronne, et ma tendresse pour ma famille, s'opposent à ce que j'adopte rien de ce qui me mettroit en

spectacle aux yeux de l'Europe. Je puis éprouver le sort de Charles Ier., parce que, lorsque les barrières de la justice sont rompues, il n'y a pas plus de sûreté pour celui qui règne, que pour celui qui aspire à régner à son tour. Lorsque la tempête brise le vaisseau, il ne reste plus au passager que le courage de la résignation; c'est à-peu-près ma position. Adieu, mon cher frère, les périls qu'on me fait appréhender, n'altéreront jamais ce que je me dois comme roi, et comme le Chef d'une des premières nations du monde.

LOUIS.

P. S. Je vous joins copie d'une lettre que j'ai écrit à Dumourier, qui, pour d'autres motifs, m'avoit fait à-peu-près la même proposition que M. de Rivarol.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LIV.

To Monsieur.

April 26th, 1792.

You have judged with great sagacity, my dear brother, the men who occupy the different places in the ministry; but it is easier to appreciate their value than to direct my choice towards those, by whom they should be replaced.

Dumourier has too much effervescence of head, and his wit could serve me little. His ambition and versatile principles prove that intriguer find sooner or later the means of putting themselves forward. This Du-

mourier is in general far below what he himself believes to be his value. As for M. de Narbonne, he is wild in his ideas, destitute of talents, and his life has been a tissue of follies, which he has crowned by becoming the minister of those who would no longer have a king. M. de Grave has an heated imagination, without any resources of mind. The ministry of war under those three men has been an echo of political discord. They were not capable of maintaining discipline in the army, nor had they the art of conciliating its esteem. The innovations introduced among the troops by the present circumstances, were the effect of mediocrity on the one part, and of that timidity on the other, which has emboldened the factious. As for that Roland, who has been extolled to me as a sage who would become a second Sully, I have found him only a man of system; his puritan aspect conceals an ambition always ready to display itself; but that hypocrisy which serves him as a

mask, makes him studious not to be penetrated. This Roland is married to a woman of considerable talents, who presides over the labors of his cabinet, and directs his ministry. The queen views with horror those new faces, but the Girondins, who have acquired a vast preponderance, govern public opinion. An advocate is distinguished in this deputation, of the name of Vergniaud; he has more real eloquence than Mirabeau; affects less importance in his manners; and his ideas are more solid, and perhaps more brilliant. I am assured that he is not a bad man, but he has a meridional head, thirsts after celebrity, and is possessed by the rage of regenerating France after the manner of ancient Rome. Brissot has considerable influence in the sphere in which he moves; and, also, a certain *curé* Grégoire, whose motto is *philanthropism*. This apostle of the Negroes cries loudly against tyranny, but his credit is only of the second order.

M. de Rivarol, whose talents are precious to me, and whose zeal is persevering, made me yesterday a most singular proposition, and which perhaps any other person than myself would adopt. "I have meditated," said he, "on your situation; I have weighed the chances for and against you, and think I know the character of the French sufficiently, to advise you to take advantage of the folly of the day, in a manner which will triple your power."

"Since the Jacobins would destroy every thing only to reign, go boldly to the society itself, place upon your royal brow the red cap, in the name of which they command, and you have the birthright of authority. The astonishment, the frenzy, which so extraordinary a step will excite, will incontestably baffle all the criminal designs of your enemies; it will *nationalise* you, and strike dumb the horde of conspirators." Such, my dear brother, is in sub-

stance one of those thousand and one plans proposed to me by the zeal of the friends to the monarchy, in order to struggle with the monster, who is on the eve of devouring France. You will feel that my religion, my honor, the dignity of my crown, and my tenderness for my family, all oppose my adopting a plan which would render me a spectacle in the eyes of Europe. I may undergo the fate of Charles the first; because when the barriers of justice are broken down, there remains no more security for him who fills the throne, than for him who aspires to occupy his place. When the tempest has shattered the vessel, nothing remains for the passenger, but the courage of resignation; and such is nearly my position. Farewell, my dear brother; the dangers I am made to fear, shall never have any influence on what I owe to myself as king, and as the chief of one of the first nations of the world.

LEWIS.

P. S. I subjoin the copy of a letter, which I have written to Dumourier, who, from other motives, had made me nearly the same propositions as those of M. Rivarol.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-FOURTH LETTER.

In contempt of the decree which declared the king's brothers fallen from the succession, and traitors to their country, and notwithstanding the royal proclamations issued against them, Lewis the sixteenth continued an affectionate correspondence with his brothers; which, however politically censurable, renders him only more amiable and interesting. This letter is a kind of commentary on the observations which Monsieur had made, respecting the personages who

had filled, and who were then filling, the first offices of the administration, and contains the king' real opinions on the respective merits of the ministers. His judgment is not widely different from that which history has already affixed to some of those characters. But the hatred which the king had always vowed against the popular party, too plainly discovers itself when he talks of Roland. Roland was partly what the king describes him, a man of system, but it was a system of inflexible rectitude. The king must naturally have been displeased with this unbending spirit, which would sacrifice no duty, and make no compromise with truth; accustomed as he was to the accomodating manners, and courteous delusions of more complaisant ministers. With respect to Roland's puritan appearance, there may be some foundation for the king's complaint. The exterior of this minister was not singularly prepossessing for a court; but there was no affectation in his simplicity, and

Roland would have appeared much more ridiculous, had he changed his modest attire for the trappings and decorations of a courtier. The charge of hypocrisy is much more serious, since that reflects on his moral character. On what proof the king brings forward this accusation, is not explained; and what interest Roland had to be a hypocrite cannot readily be conceived. Had he been guilty of the charge alledged, he would have remained longer in place. His conduct at the end of his short administration, ought to have gained him any other epithet at the court. Roland was a man of strict faith and unimpeached integrity; these virtues were unknown at the Tuilleries: "the queen saw with horror all these new faces;" and it was not difficult, since the appearance of great qualities could not be denied, to place them all to the account of hypocrisy.

Among the active members of the administration, the king enumerates Madame

Roland as presiding over the affairs of the interior. If the history of this short administration, contained in her memoirs, be true, and its authenticity I never heard doubted, it is less the hypocrisy than the credulity of the minister, which should have been the object of censure; for she, (the martyred saint of liberty!) it appears, was the only one who, with superior discernment, penetrated the real views and intentions of the court. Vergniaud's distinguished talents, notwithstanding the king's profound hatred of the party, forced from him a most brilliant eulogium. To be superior to Mirabeau in that quality which has gained Mirabeau an exclusive reputation, is no slight praise; but Vergniaud had one undisputed advantage over his rival; for Vergniaud was not only, as the king has observed, negatively good, he was not only not a bad man, but was as correct in his moral qualities, as he was brilliant in those which were intellectual. Brissot is mentioned also

with eulogium; for so it must be accounted, when he who had more than a Roman love of his country, and sealed his attachment to liberty with his blood, is not mentioned by the court with blame: but it is difficult to avoid smiling at the contempt, with which the king treats "a certain" Gregoire. This affected ignorance of a person who was at that time so distinguished by his great and admirable qualities, reminds us of a passage in Whitelock's memorials, where he speaks of one John Milton, a blind man, who was skilled in the latin tongue. The whole life of Gregoire proves, however, the justice of the king's remark, that his motto was philanthropy, and that he well deserved the honorable title conferred by the monarch, of the apostle of the Africans.

But while the king scrutinises with due severity the morals of those leaders of the popular party, he pours the full flow of royal gratitude on the precious lights and

unrelenting zeal of M. de Rivarol, who appears, from the style in which he is mentioned, to have left all other competitors for royal favor far behind.

Rivarol's counter-revolutionary stratagems were, in general, harmless from their extravagance. The proposal he now makes the king is in his best manner; but Lewis the sixteenth had too much good sense to act the harlequin in the *bonnet rouge*, which was the distinctive mark of the exaggerated faction in the jacobin society, and which not only would have degraded him in the eyes of all Europe, as the king well surmises, but would have contributed more effectually to hasten his fall.

This, says the king, alluding to the stories in the Arabian Nights, is one among the thousand and one projects which the friends of the monarchy propose, in order to struggle against the monster, which is on the eve

of devouring France. Vain subtilties of courtly genius! A little exertion of common sense, or common honesty, would have put the monster to more speedy flight than all the fanciful experiments of these friends to the monarchy; but what appears more singular is, that the king seems to have had the same persuasion, and yet he talks of the precious lights and indefatigable zeal of those, who were pushing him with the utmost rapidity, headlong to his ruin.

We may observe, however, from the style of this letter, compared with those which the king had written to his brothers, that a better understanding had taken place between them. The king makes no more complaints to Monsieur respecting his emigration, or the dangers which attended himself from the rendezvous of the armed nobles and princes on the Rhine. The war was now declared, and the friends of the monarchy without were on their march to

establish good order within. Yet the king has some misgivings, and talks of the fate of Charles the first, and of the courage of resignation; observing, and with truth, as a general remark, that when the barriers of justice are broken down, there is no more safety for him who reigns, than for those who aspire to reign after him.

LETTRE LV.

Au ministre Dumourier.

24 Avril, 1792.

On veut que je transige avec le crime; on me fait d'insolentes propositions: on pretend avilir mon ame après avoir avili ma couronne. On voudroit que les factieux puissent se glorifier de me voir, pour eux, renoncer à la grandeur, à la noble fierté qui me convient, à ma probité, pour aller me placer dans leur rang, coiffer leur bonnet rouge, et fraterniser avec les enfans perdus d'une fougeuse démagogie, les ennemis de tout pouvoir, les satellites d'un ambitieux infame et déloyal. Non, point de transaction avec le crime, mon cœur abhorre l'imposture. J'ai pu, guidé par une

sage politique, céder plus que ma conscience et ma volonté ne me permettoient de céder; mais je n'ai point été un traître ni un perfide. Les vrais amis de la constitution me verront toujours défendre cette charte nationale que j'ai long-temps hésité de sanctionner, et que peut-être mon intérêt, celui de mon fils, me faisoient un devoir de rejeter. Mais j'ai promis; le temps, l'expérience, l'opinion publique seront consultés, et la volonté royale, l'intérêt du roi de France seront toujours oubliés. N'espérez pas, monsieur, que je change d'opinion, que je me place au-dessus de la constitution, ni au-dessous : je conserverai le rang où elle me place. On ne me verra point chercher un asile dans l'antre des jacobins, ni des protecteurs parmi ceux que je ferois punir un jour si l'ordre se rétablit, si la constitution me déclare toujours le roi des Français, et si la vertu se trouve enfin en majorité dans la France infortunée. Si vous avez promis, monsieur, retirez votre pa-

role; dites bien à ceux qui vous ont fait d'insidieuses propositions, oui, monsieur, d'insidieuses, que je ne puis les accepter..... dites-leur qu'elles me font horreur. Qu'ils me calomnient, qu'ils se vengent, je serai fidèle aux gens de bien qui me regardent; aux amis de la constitution qui doivent se fier à moi; à tous les Français que la nuit de l'erreur et du mensonge ne doit envelopper toujours, et dont je serai continuellement le père et le meilleur ami. Voilà, monsieur, ma profession de foi et ma réponse; vous pouvez la faire connoître, vous ne serez pas désavoué.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LV.

To Minister Dumourier.

April 24th, 1792.

There is a plan formed to lead me to enter into composition with crime, and I receive insolent propositions from those who would debase my mind, after degrading my crown.

Factious men are anxious to enjoy the triumph of seeing me renounce for them, the greatness, the noble dignity which it is fit I should feel, renounce my integrity, place myself in their ranks, cover my forehead with their red cap, and become a

member of the fraternity of profligate and turbulent demagogues, the enemies of all power, the satellites of an infamous, disloyal, ambitious villain. No! no parley with crime; my heart abhors imposture!

I might, directed by sound policy, have yielded more than my conscience, and my will would lead me to renounce, but I have been neither a traitor or impostor. The real friends of the constitution shall always see me defend this national charter, which I long hesitated to sanction, and which perhaps my own interests, and those of my son, made it my duty to reject. But I have given my promise; time, experience, public opinion, shall be consulted, and the royal will, and the interests of the king of France, shall be always forgotten. Do not hope, Sir, that I shall change my opinion, or place myself above or below the constitution. I will remain in the rank, in which it has placed me, and will never be seen

looking for an asylum in the den of the jacobins, or seeking protection among those whom I shall one day punish, if order be re-established, if the constitution continues to declare me king of the French, and if virtue obtains at length a majority in this unfortunate country.

If you have promised, Sir, retract your word, and declare to those who have made you these insidious propositions,—yes, Sir, insidious, -- that I cannot accept them—I tell them, that they fill me with horror. Let them calumniate me, let them avenge themselves; I will remain faithful to men of worth, whose eyes are turned towards me; to the friends of the constitution, who should place in me their confidence; and to all the French, who will not for ever remain enveloped in the shades of error and falsehood, and of whom I shall never cease to be the father and best friend. Such, Sir,

is my profession of faith, and my answer; you may make it known, without fear of being disavowed.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-FIFTH LETTER.

This letter to Dumourier robs M. de Rivarol of the exclusive honor of leading the king to decorate his royal brow with the *bonnet rouge*, and fraternise with the jacobins. That ingenious idea seems, however, from the co-incidence, to be an affair of partnership between the minister and the courtier; but as Dumourier's motives

in proposing it were supposed to be less friendly to the monarchy than those of M. de Rivarol, the king treats his proposition with becoming dignity, and even with a severity, which, situated as he then was, discovered more courage than discretion.

The king, in this letter, not only rejects these "insolent propositions" with indignation, but takes occasion to inveigh, and in no measured terms, against the society of which he is invited to become a member, and which he menaces with exemplary punishment, whenever the reign of good order should be established.

It is evident from the expressions contained in this letter, that the king fixes his resentment more particularly on one party in this society, to which Dumourier was more than suspected to belong; and which he characterises as the satellites of an ambitious and disloyal villain. The Duke of

Orleans is the person whom he has here in view; and the king allows his minister, with whose maneuvre he seems acquainted, to make known to the party his opinion of their merits. It is probably, also, to this faction that M. Rivarol alludes, when he assures the king, that the extraordinary measure to which he advises him would incontestably counteract all the criminal plots of his enemies, and even *nationalize* him. From M. Rivarol's opinion it appears, that the will of the nation was little in unison with that of the court, and that the jacobins of that generation, unlike their sanguinary successors, were regarded by all parties as the most faithful friends of the constitution, and of liberty.

LETTRE LVI.

Réponse au ministre Roland.

21 Mai, 1792.

On peut m'étonner, mais on ne peut m'inspirer aucune crainte, et jamais maîtriser mon ame par ce moyen. Je sais que le parti dont vous me vantez le patriotisme, la puissance et la grande influence, est capable de tout oser; mais je sais aussi, que le parti qui lui est opposé est plus nombreux, moins exalté; il se compose d'une majorité de gens de bien, qui doivent enfin montrer de l'audace, et user du courage de la vertu. Je sais que je puis succomber; que les méchans sont capables de tout, que le peuple égaré croit à leur patriotisme, à leur désintéressement; mais, monsieur,

j'ose prédire que le triomphe de ces gens-là ne sera pas de longue durée : si je succombe, ils voudront partager mes dépouilles. Ce partage amenera des funestes divisions : les gens de bien pourront alors respirer un moment ; c'est alors qu'ils retrouveront leur courage ; leur cause est juste, ils triompheront ; les Français seront vengés : un jour peut-être ils daigneront justifier ma mémoire. Monsieur, je ne verrai point ces gens-là, et jamais je ne pourrai transiger avec eux. Voilà ma résolution ; elle est immuable.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LVI.

Answer to the minister Roland.

May 21st, 1792.

I may be astonished, but it is impossible to inspire me with fear, or to obtain by those means an ascendency over my mind. I know that the party of which you boast to me the patriotism, the power, and the great influence, is capable of daring every thing; but I know also that the party in opposition is more numerous, less hot-headed, and formed of the vast majority of men of worth, who will at length display their firmness, and employ the courage of virtue. I know I may fall, that the wicked

are capable of every thing; that the people, led astray, believe in their patriotism, their disinterestedness; but I dare venture to predict, Sir, that the triumph of those will not be of long duration. If I fall, they will be eager to divide my spoils, and this division will lead to fatal animosities. Good men will then revive for one moment, and take fresh courage; their cause is just, and they will triumph. The French people will be avenged, and will one day perhaps deign to justify my memory. I will not see, or come to any terms, Sir, with the men in question; such is my unalterable resolution.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-SIXTH LETTER.

At the time when Roland made those observations to the king, respecting the force of the party to which he belonged, the nation was divided into two great political sects, known at Paris under the name of feuillants and jacobins, from the place of their respective assemblies. The feuillants were more or less friendly to the revolution, but distinguished for their attachment rather to the royal than the popular part of the constitution; while the jacobins, devoted to the latter, were strenuous in keeping the exercise of the royal authority within the constitutional limits. Such were the leading principles of those two great parties; but there were factions in each whose views corresponded with neither. In

the feuillant party, some were anxious for the return of the old regime with all its abuses; in the jacobin, some were for a new dynasty, or rather the removal of the crown into the Orleans branch; while others were for no crown, or rather for no government whatever. The Orleans faction had but few advocates; this, since known under the name of anarchists, was more numerous, and composed of those men, who, seizing on the government in the year which followed the fall of the throne, covered France with scaffolds and desolation.

The false steps and counter-revolutionary measures of the Tuilleries, had given this latter faction some consistency in the jacobin society, as it was difficult to deny or extenuate the charges which these vigilant adversaries of royal authority brought against the court. But as those who composed this faction were, in general, men more audacious than moral, and more enterprising than enlightened, the

jacobins, who wished for the strict observance of the constitution in the spirit, as well as the letter, began to entertain a salutary dread of their opinions. It was this dread which led the jacobin chiefs to seek a coalition with the feuillants against a foe that was common to both, which the event soon afterwards proved; but as the observance of the spirit of the constitution did not fall within the views or the politics of the Tuilleries, the minister's admonition was the gospel preached to those that were lost.

The king was sufficiently acquainted with the state of parties at that period to make these distinctions; but he was too closely pressed by friends to the monarchy, to follow the dictates of his own better judgment. One of his ministers, from whose letters I cite, observes, "I have never seen the king yield to his council, in things even of which he felt the necessity, as well as the advantage for himself, when his private council had pre-

viously forbidden him to grant any thing, without consulting them. I could cite twenty proofs of what I advance. I have often seen the king testify his embarrassment when convinced of the truth of what his ministers said to him, break up the council, not knowing what to answer, unwilling either to betray his conscience, or violate the promise he had given, before he entered the council chamber."

The king was now approaching that catastrophe which hurled him from the throne. He appears to have a presentiment of his own fate, and, with something of a prophetic but angry spirit, predicts that of the minister, and those associated with him. The prophecy was too fatally fulfilled for all; but it was that event which Roland was so earnest to prevent, in the counsels he gave the king, and which the latter rejected with so much inflexibility and sternness.

LETTRE LVII.

A M. le duc de Brissac.

27 Mai, 1792.

L'OPINION que vous avez manifestée hier, me plaît infiniment. Il faut céder pour ne pas irriter; il faut céder pour ôter tout prétexte à mes ennemis de calomnier mes intentions. Vous pouvez mettre à exécution le licenciement de la garde constitutionnelle qui m'avoit été accordée. J'espère que ce licenciement ne sera que provisoire. Il est impossible que cet état de méfiance soit de longue durée. On veut tracasser et me faire perdre patience; on ne réussira pas. Je suis accoutumé aux sacrifices; celui-ci est pénible, je l'avoue. Cette garde me fournissoit les moyens d'être utile à tant de

braves gens qui ont tout perdu en prenant ma défense. Je redoute, pour eux, les services qu'ils m'ont rendus. Certaines gens me détestent si cordialement, qu'ils ont une haine prononcée pour tout ce qui m'environne ou me paroît attaché. Monsieur, dites à tous ces braves gens, qu'ils seront toujours à mon service, que je serai toujours leur père. Peignez-leur toute ma douleur, et témoignez mes regrets à tous ceux qui faisoient partie de ce corps, auquel j'étois fort attaché. Dites-leur que j'espère un jour les réunir, récompenser leur zèle, et payer les services que m'ont rendus et que peuvent me rendre encore des fidèles sujets. Pour vous, monsieur, je ne vous remercie point: Vous êtes Français, vous respectez votre roi, vous savez remplir vos devoirs. Vous aimer, vous estimer, et vous le prouver, voilà quels sont les miens.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LVII.

To the duke de Brissac.

May 27th, 1792.

I am highly pleased with the opinion you manifested yesterday; we must yield that we may not irritate, we must yield that we may deprive our enemies of every pretext of calumniating our intentions. You may put into execution the dismission of the constitutional guard, which they had appointed for me; I hope this dismission will be temporary; it is impossible that this state of distrust can be durable. They wish to torment, and make me lose patience, but they will not succeed; I am accustomed to make sacrifices, yet I own that this a painful one.

This guard furnished me with the means of being useful to so many brave men, who have lost all by taking my defence. I fear for them on account of the services they have rendered me. Certain persons detest me so cordially, that they bear an inveterate hatred towards all who approach, or appear attached to me. Tell those brave men, Sir, that they shall always remain in my service, and that I will always be their father; paint my distress, and testify my regrets to all who compose this corps, for which I have so great an attachment. Tell them I hope one day to re-assemble them, to recompense their zeal, and repay the services already rendered, and which may yet be rendered me by faithful subjects. For you, Sir, I will not thank you; you are a Frenchman, you respect your king, and know how to fulfil your duty; mine is to love and esteem you, and give you the proof of those sentiments.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

M. de Brissac was certainly one of those who contributed most actively to the dismission of the king's constitutional guard, and to the pain which this suppression cost him. This guard was at first composed, in great part, of citizens sent from the departments, but who were so ill-treated and so disgusted by M. de Brissac, and the officers whom he had chosen to serve under his orders, that almost the whole asked leave to quit that service, in which, as this was the end to be attained, their commander readily acquiesced. The persons selected to fill their place are characterised by the king as honest men (*des braves gens*), who had lost every thing in taking his defence, and to whom he had the means of

being useful. But whatever dispositions those honest men had in their turn to be useful to the king, their insolence towards their fellow-citizens, more particularly the members of the assembly, was such, and their existence as a military corps became so public a nuisance, that a general insurrection of all parties was feared against them. Notwithstanding the king's predilection for this chosen band, he gave his sanction to the decree for their dissolution; and this letter to M. de Brissac was soon followed by the royal mandate, to send him a prisoner of state before the supreme national tribunal at Orleans, on the charge of a conspiracy against the national representation.

LETTRE LVIII.

A Monsieur.

29 Mai, 1792.

L'AUDACE des factieux n'a plus de frein, mon cher frère; les propositions les plus absurdes me sont faites pour abdiquer la couronne. Si je diffère à cette mesure prétendue de *salut public*, on proclamera roi des Français, mon fils. Un conseil de régence présidera jusqu'à sa majorité, toutes les affaires, et signera en son nom. Si j'acquiesce, on me laissera la liberté de faire ma résidence où bon me semblera, *même hors du royaume.* On me laissera la propriété de tous mes biens patrimoniaux, avec un traitement de cinq millions, dont deux seroient réversibles sur la reine,

si je venois à mourir. Ces propositions m'ont été faites par un homme que je ne puis encore vous nommer, mais qui est l'ame de cette société qui, jusqu'à ce jour, à sapé tout ce que les siècles avoient consolidé. Des lettres anonymes me parviennent de toute part. On m'annonce que nous touchons à l'époque d'une tragédie, dont le dénouement sera la chute de la monarchie, et ma mort, si je ne me décide pas à rentrer dans la vie privée. Je n'écouterai point des insinuations criminelles; je mourrai où la Providence m'a placé, imperturbable, parce que je n'ai jamais cessé d'être juste. Je suis entièrement résigné à tout. Dieu, et l'espérance, voilà, mon frère, ce qui ne peut m'être ravi. J'ai, pour braver la haine des méchans, ma conscience, et la fermeté du malheur.

Adieu; je vous écrirai plus longuement après-demain.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LVIII.

To Monsieur.

May 29th, 1792.

THE daring boldness of the factious, my dear brother, no longer knows any bounds. The most absurd propositions are made me to abdicate the crown. If I consent to this measure of *public safety*, they will proclaim my son king of the French; a council of regency will preside until his majority, and all affairs will be transacted in his name. If I acquiesce, I shall have the liberty of choosing my place of residence, wherever I think proper, even *out of the kingdom*. I shall be left the property of all my patrimonial possessions, with a revenue of five millions, of which two reversible to the

queen, in case of my death. These proposals have been made to me by a person, whom I cannot yet name to you, but who is the soul of that society, which to this day has undermined all that ages had consolidated. Anonymous letters pour on me from all quarters, in which it is announced that we touch on the epocha of a tragedy, of which the catastrophe will be the fall of the monarchy, and my death, if I do not decide upon entering into private life. I will not lend an ear to those criminal insinuations, but will die where Providence has placed me, unmoved, because I have never ceased to be just. I am entirely resigned to all that can happen. God, and hope; this, my brother, is what cannot be taken from me; to brave the hatred of the wicked, I have my conscience and the courage of misfortune. Farewell; I will write to you more at length, the day after to-morrow.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS.

ON THE FIFTY-EIGHTH LETTER.

SITUATED as the king was at this epocha, under the controul of a secret council, directing his operations to an end the inverse of the principles of the revolution, the opinion of the public, and the spirit of the constitution; enthralled by engagements with foreign powers, to whom he had made an appeal against the liberties of his country; with the uncertainty of success hanging on his mind, and presenting him with the most gloomy images of the future; it would not have appeared extraordinary, if some real friend to his honor, his happiness, and his repose, should have made him those propositions of which he complains so loftily to his brother, and which he rejects with so much indignation.

The cruel catastrophe which soon after followed, leads us to regret, not that he refused these offers, for which there was no pledge, or security; but that, feeling in his own conscience how contrary he was once again acting to his public professions, dreading the horrors of war which he was now inviting to his country, tortured with public councils which warned him of his duty, and following those which prepared his destruction; in these perplexing circumstances, and which he saw in all those dark colors which the events too well verified, he had not himself the courage to throw aside incumbrances that embittered his repose, and escape from dangers that menaced his ruin.

But such is the witchery of power on ordinary minds; Sylla, the queen of Sweden, and Charles the fifth, knew the value of power, and despised it, though to these great personages it presented itself under its most flattering forms. Lewis, torn and dismantled,

still clung to the shreds, and, like the miser in the shipwreck, perished, because loaded with his treasure.

With respect to these propositions, we know nothing more than is contained in the king's letter. The king communicated the fact, but instructs his brother in no other detail respecting the person, than that he was the soul of that society which had sapped all that ages had hitherto consolidated. It is evident, that by this periphrasis the king means the jacobin society, whose merits or demerits we shall not now investigate; but only observe, that whoever was the person thus designated, he was careful to conceal his propositions from the most respectable of its members. I am told by one of those who were at that time the king's ministers, and consequently ranked by the court writers in the class of jacobins, that such propositions were altogether unknown to them; they were earnest in giving other counsels, which, had

 the

the king followed, would have rendered the project of his abdication unnecessary.

The party of the Gironde, who had at this period the greatest influence on the public mind, and whose friends were the ministers of the day, had an interest totally opposite to the king's abdication, and were earnest to prevail on Lewis to second the views, which they thought best fitted to consolidate the constitution. The king's abdication, it is presumed, therefore, must have been made by that party where Dumourier dominated. This minister was deemed at the time the soul of the Orleans faction, which Lewis the sixteenth mistook for the jacobin society. The regency was constitutionally to be vested in that branch of the family which had not forfeited its rights; and as the king's brothers were now declared traitors, it was not improbable, that one of those events which take place in times of revolution, might have changed the regency into a royal succession.

LETTRE LIX.

A M. Montmorin.

17 Juin, 1792.

Le maire de Paris sort de chez moi, mon cher Montmorin; il m'a parlé des plaintes au nom des gardes nationaux de Marseille, qui prétendent avoir été insultés par des personnes attachées à mon service. J'ai dit à M. le maire que j'en ferois justice, mais que je ne pouvois la faire qu'en me désignant les coupables. Cette réponse n'a point paru satisfaire M. Péthion.

M. de Lessart m'a rendu compte qu'il y avoit des rassemblemens inquiétans, pour l'ordre public, dans plusieurs faubourgs.

Voyez, mon cher Montmorin, à vous consulter avec M. de la Porte, pour conjurer ce nouvel orage.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LIX.

To M. Montmorin.

June 17th, 1792.

The mayor of Paris has just left me, my dear Montmorin, and has made complaints to me, in the name of the national guards of Marseilles, who pretend that they have been insulted by persons attached to my service. I told the mayor, I should give

proper satisfaction, but could not do so unless the persons were pointed out to me. This answer did not appear to satisfy M. Pethion.

M. de Lessart has informed me, that there were groups, collected in several of the suburbs, which menace the public tranquillity. Endeavor, my dear Montmorin, to concert measures with M. de la Porte, in order to avert this new storm.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE FIFTY-NINTH LETTER.

This letter to M. de Montmorin appears of too little importance to need any observation, were it not connected with the arrival of the

Marseillais guards at Paris, in their way to the frontiers; an event, from which may be dated the first decisive step towards the fall of the throne.

The king had now dismissed the three ministers, whose nomination in the month of March, had suspended that national discontent, which was rising into insurrection against the administration of the ministers whom they replaced. Ignorant of the extent of the evils which these courtly agents were bringing on their country, by the fatal influence which they exercised over the mind of the king, and which we see consigned in the confessions of their guilt, published under the title of history, or annals of the revolution; the three ministers, their successors, had been active during their short administration to correct part of the mischiefs which they found, and provide against those which they dreaded. The legislative body, seeing the misfortunes that had attended the opening of

the campaign, and which were in perfect unison with the feelings of the court; and fearing the progress of the enemy towards the capital, which the court, if we may credit the annalist, was then taking measures to facilitate, had decreed, on the proposition of the minister of war, M. Servan, the formation of a camp between the frontiers and Paris, not only as a depot for the previous discipline of the volunteers repairing to the armies, but also in case of extremity, if the enemy pierced the frontiers, to serve as the last dyke against the invasion of the metropolis.

Although the assembly had decreed that this camp should consist of only twenty thousand men, yet as the court reasonably feared that the number might increase in proportion to the danger, and deemed also that even that number might prove inconvenient for the Austrian armies in the position it was destined to take, the king found

pretences to defer his sanction, till, with the instrumentality of Dumourier, he relieved himself from the burden of alternate solicitation and reproach, by dismissing his ministers. "I had already," says M. Servan, "struggled against many obstacles; the resistance became more weak, and I began to hope. Nevertheless, at the moment when I had flattered myself that I should be of some use to my country, I received orders from the king to give up my porte-feuille." Dumourier took the place of Servan as minister of war, and the sanction to the decree was boldly and definitively refused.

M. Servan's letter, of which the above is an extract, filled the legislative body with consternation. The assembly, still less in the secret of the court than the ministers, could not divine what were the intentions of the king. The only resistance which the constitution allowed them, was the expression of their disapprobation, which they consigned in

a decree, or declaration, that M. Servan was accompanied in his retreat by the regrets of legislative body, and of the nation.

The dismission of Servan was followed by that of Roland and Claviere, to whose employments were named ministers, whose greatest merit was their nullity, and who were less likely to counteract the projects of the court. This was a strange error into which the court was betrayed; since having acquired the habit of dissimulation by so long a practice, it was singular, that at the moment when deceit could best have served its purpose, it should thus have thrown off the mask, and braved the opinion of the nation. The indignation which was now publicly felt, was as generally proclaimed; and the legislature saw its bar crowded with remonstrances, not of ordinary complaint or measured sedition, but of such nature and tendency as betokened civil disruptions, and the instant annihilation of all order and government.

It might have been supposed that the king, who more than once had experience of what the people were capable when loosened from restraint, would have felt less composure at the menacing aspect which the population of Paris now discovered. His letter to M. de Montmorin advises this ex-minister of meetings hostile to public order, which were taking place in the faubourgs; and invites him, in conjunction with M. de la Porte, to avert this new storm. The popular elements were at that moment in too great fermentation to be appeased by the instrumentality of such feeble agents. It was the march of a pigmy to arrest the progress of a giant.

LETTRE LX.

A M. Montmorin.

21 Juin, 1792.

Ce n'est point de l'indignation, mon cher Montmorin, que j'ai éprouvé dans la journée d'hier; c'est vraiment le tourment d'une ame navrée de voir le délire où s'est porté le peuple. L'aspect des hommes qui ont osé me menacer, ne m'a pas intimidé un seul instant: ce qui ne sera jamais croyable pour la postérité, c'est que toutes ces horreurs se sont passées sous les yeux des représentans de la nation, sans qu'ils aient fait le moindre effort pour réprimer et pour punir les perturbateurs de l'ordre public. Vous savez mieux qu'un autre, mon cher Montmorin, que j'ai sacrifié, au bonheur des

Français, les prérogatives de ma couronne, l'intérêt de ma famille, et les habitudes de mon enfance: qu'en est-il résulté? des outrages. En attendant que la nation soit éclairée par une fatale expérience, je crois que je ne dois rien changer dans mes projets, pour le moment.

Vous pouvez faire paroître la proclamation dont je vous ai envoyé, avant-hier, le précis: donnez l'ordre à *Parisot* de la faire imprimer dans la journée. En venant me voir demain sur les dix heures du matin, je vous dirai beaucoup de choses qui demandent des détails.

Bon soir, mon cher Montmorin.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LX.

To M. Montmorin.

June 21st, 1792.

It was not indignation, my dear Montmorin, that I felt in the course of yesterday, but the torments of a mind pierced with anguish, in observing to what a height the people carried their frenzy. I was not intimidated one moment by the sight of men, who dared to menace me; but what will appear incredible to posterity, is, that all those horrors have taken place before the eyes of the representatives of the nation, who have not made the smallest effort to restrain and punish the violators of the

public peace. You know better than others, my dear Montmorin, that I have sacrificed the prerogatives of my crown, the interests of my family, and the habits of my infancy to the happiness of the French. What is the result? outrages. Until the time come, when the nation shall be enlightened by fatal experience, I think that I ought not to change any thing in my projects.— You may get the proclamation published, of which I sent you a sketch the day before yesterday. Order Parisot to print it in the course of the day. If you come to see me to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, I will tell you many things, which require explanation.

Good night, my dear Montmorin.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE SIXTIETH LETTER.

It will always remain extremely difficult to form an accurate judgment respecting the events of the twentieth of June. It appears, however, certain, that this day was projected to oblige the king to recall the ministers whom he had dismissed a few days before; but it is highly improbable, that it was the intention of the leaders to penetrate into the palace of the Tuilleries, to insult the king and queen, and menace them with assassination.

Had the mob, or those by whom it was incited, formed so criminal a project as that of assassination, it could certainly have been easy to have carried it into execution,

amidst the scenes of tumult, of insolence, and brutality, which took place in the chamber of the king, who remained a prisoner for a considerable time amidst the populace, without guards or attendants. That the leaders of the opposition to the court had no part in these outrages, seems evident; since, far from furthering their views, it gave, like all tumults of this illegal nature, a momentary popularity to those, whom it was their interest to render odious. The court-agents were accused at the time of having carried the populace to this excess, to prevent the future employment of such instruments, and discredit popular addresses; but though in the habit of trick and stratagem for the service of the court, it is scarcely probable that they would have had recourse to such dangerous expedients.

LETTRE LXI.

A Mesdames.

25 Juin, 1792.

Nos malheurs, mes chères tantes, sont parvenus au dernier degré; le plus horrible attentat a eu lieu; mon asile a été violé; j'ai été insulté, menacé, exposé aux coups des assassins. Mes enfans, la reine, madame Élisabeth ont partagé mon sort; vous recevrez les détails de cette journée affreuse, qui doit indigner les Français, pour qui l'amour de l'ordre est le premier des biens. L'Europe apprendra sans doute, avec la plus profonde indignation, ce nouvel outrage fait à ma personne. La Providence veille encore sur moi et sur ma famille; puisse le ciel détourner l'orage qui gronde encore,

et

et sauver celui qui vous aime, qui souvent s'entretient de vous, et vous félicite d'être loin d'une terre, où le crime veille, où les lois ne peuvent atteindre les coupables, où l'autorité n'a plus de force, où la vertu est sans considération, et la licence érigée en patriotisme.

Recevez les expressions les plus affectueuses de mon tendre attachement.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LXI.

To Mesdames.

June 25th, 1792.

Our misfortunes, my dear aunts, have reached their last term; the most horrible

crime has been perpetrated; my asylum violated, myself insulted, menaced, and exposed to the fury of assassins. My children, the queen, and Madame Elizabeth have shared my fate. You will receive the details of that hideous day, which must penetrate every Frenchman with horror, who considers order as the first of blessings. Europe will no doubt learn, with the deepest indignation, this new outrage, committed against my person. Providence still watches over me and my family; may heaven avert the storm that still rages, and save him who loves you, who thinks of you often, and congratulates you on being distant from a country, where the wicked are vigilant, where laws cannot reach the guilty, where authority is without force, virtue without esteem, and where licentiousness has usurped the name of patriotism.

Accept the assurances of the most tender and affectionate attachment.

LEWIS.

LETTRE LXII.

A Monsieur.

1.er Juillet, 1792.

Vous êtes déjà instruit, mon cher frère, des outrages que j'ai endurés dans la journée du 20 juin; outrages d'autant plus sensibles, que la portion du peuple qui a violé ma demeure, étoit guidé par des hommes que j'avois autrefois comblés de mes bienfaits. La garde nationale, qui devoit, à tous les titres, me défendre, étoit vendue aux perturbateurs. Leur chef étoit trop fier de me braver, pour être tenté d'user de son autorité.

J'ai opposé aux clameurs de la malveillance, le calme de l'imperturbabilité; cette

fermeté froide a déconcerté, pour ce jour-là, leurs projets sanguinaires. La reine et toute ma famille ont montré une résignation héroïque; nous sommes familiarisés, depuis long-temps, à croire tout possibles; notre sort est trop au-dessous de l'envie, pour que le crime n'achève ce qu'il a commencé. . . . . L'Assemblée a manifesté partiellement une indignation profonde. Legendre disoit à la tribune des Jacobins, que le peuple avoit honoré son mandataire en l'allant visiter. Marat et Hébert proclamoient, dans leurs feuilles, les mêmes principes. Des aboyeurs payés faisoient, sous mes fenêtres, des menaces qui prouvoient l'audace des factieux. Sans les consolations de la religion, il y a déjà long-temps que j'aurois renoncé au pouvoir suprême : Dumourier m'a proposé divers plans pour déjouer les complots des Jacobins, des Robespierre et des Danton; mais cela ne pourra se faire sans une grande effusion de sang; j'aime mille fois mieux

être la victime des méchans, que de souiller ma vie par la mort d'un seul Français. Lorsque je vois la perversité triompher, et l'audace se montrer la rivale de la justice distributive, j'approuve la résolution que prit Charles-Quint, d'abdiquer le trône. J'ignore, mon cher frère, ce que la fortune me réserve dans l'avenir; quant au moment, on ne peut être plus malheureux que l'est votre ami et votre frère.

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LXII.

To Monsieur.

July 1st, 1792.

You are already informed, my dear brother, of the outrages which I endured on

the day of the 20th of June; outrages so much the more poignant, as that portion of the people who violated my dwelling, were led on by men whom I formerly loaded with benefits. The national guard, who were bound by every kind of obligation to defend me, were sold to the leaders of sedition, and their chief was too proud of braving me to think of employing his authority. — I met with composure the clamors of malignity, and this cool firmness disconcerted, for that day, their sanguinary projects. The queen and all my family displayed an heroical resignation. We have long since been familiarised to the idea of believing every thing possible; our fate is too far below envy, for the wicked not to consummate what they have begun. . . . . Part of the assembly have manifested the deepest indignation. Legendre said at the tribune of the Jacobins, that the people had done honor to their mandatary by paying him a visit. Marat

and Hebert proclaimed the same principles in their journals. Clamorous hirelings poured forth menaces under my window, which sufficiently proved the boldness of the factious. Were it not for the consolations of religion, I should long since have renounced supreme power. Dumourier has proposed several plans to me, to counteract the plots of the Jacobins, the Robespierres, and the Dantons; but these projects cannot be effected without a great effusion of blood, and I would rather a thousand times fall the victim of the wicked, than sully my life by the death of one Frenchman. When I see the triumph of the perverse, and that audacity becomes the rival of distributive justice, I approve the resolution taken by Charles the Fifth, to abdicate the throne. I know not, my dear brother, what fortune has in reserve for me hereafter; as for the present, no one can be more unhappy than your friend and brother.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE SIXTY-FIRST AND SIXTY-SECOND LETTERS.

The king, in these letters to his aunts and brother, expresses the deepest indignation at the outrages committed on his person and family on the twentieth of June. It would seem, from the manner in which the king speaks of this event, that he had penetrated the secret of those disorders; of which he was so much the more sensible, as the portion of the people which violated his dwelling, were led on by men whom he had formerly loaded with favors. "The national guard, who ought from every consideration to have defended me, was sold to those public disturbers. Their chief was too proud of an opportunity of braving me,

to make use of his authority." Neither the mayor of Paris, nor the chiefs of the opposition in the assembly, could boast of having been loaded with royal favors; the leaders of this irruption were, therefore, persons of another description.

The king was tormented with a sensibility so excessive, that the seditious exclamations of the mob, which sometimes reached his ear, gave him serious inquietudes. He despised their power, but he was tremblingly alive to every kind of reproach or blame, even from the lowest. The coarse jests of Legendre, and the repetition of his scurrilities by those monsters of the revolution Hebert and Marat, are the theme of his animadversion. The vociferations of hirelings under his windows affect him so keenly, that, but for the consolation of religion, he would rid himself of the calamities of power.

This idea of retreat, against which he exclaimed so much in a former letter, returns again at the conclusion of the present. Dumourier proposes to the king some plan, in which he would make one grand sweep of the jacobins, of the Robespierres, and the Dantons; but the king was more scrupulous than the minister; his mind always revolted at the idea of shedding blood. This humane and merciful disposition pervades his whole correspondence, and whatever weaknesses or faults we may find in the prince, we cannot refuse him sincere homage for his benevolence as a man.

LETTRE LXIII.

A Monsieur.

17 Juillet, 1792.

Il faut, mon cher frère, vous donner une idée d'une scène bien scandaleuse. Je vous ai parlé de certaines propositions qui m'ont été faites par deux députés, qui souvent votent ensemble aux Jacobins. Ces hommes, qui se détestent cordialement, qui déjà paroissent se méfier les uns des autres, et qui finiront par se faire une guerre à outrance, voudront, je ne sais trop pourquoi, me ranger sous leurs bannières. Insensible à leur promesses, à leurs menaces; sourd à leurs invitations, j'ai constamment refusé de servir leurs projets. Ils ont voulu me faire peur. Une députation de l'assemblée

m'avoit été envoyée pour des objets importans. On a réussi à composer cette députation d'hommes exaltés, de ces têtes mal organisées, qui brusquent les convenances, et qui se croient les égaux des rois, et les êtres libres par excellence, parce qu'ils ont de forts poumons, qu'ils reçurent en partage le don des injures, et qu'ils ne savent jamais respecter le malheur.

La députation est introduite. Un certain Gensonné portoit la parole; il parle bien, même avec quelque modération. Cependant des tournures singulières, des expressions hasardées défigurent son discours.

J'ai répondu; j'ai fait parler le cœur à la place de l'esprit; j'ai oublié que j'étois roi, et je me suis exprimé avec franchise.

La reine étoit présente; un jeune homme, à tête ardente, l'air très-étourdi, a pris la parole; il a gourmandé la reine : « C'est

vous, madame, a-t-il dit, qui perdez le roi; ce sont vos conseils : vous n'êtes entourée que de royalistes, et vous éloignez les patriotes. » La reine a répondu avec dignité : il a haussé les épaules. Je voulois appaiser le courroux de ce censeur indiscret. Il a repris la parole avec effronterie, et a daigné m'assurer que j'étois un brave homme, mais induit en erreur par des traîtres, des ennemis de la patrie. Que répondre pour désabuser cet homme? Garder le silence, adresser la parole à l'orateur de la députation; voilà ma conduite. J'ai apperçu que plusieurs des députés présens partageoient le délire, appeloient cela du courage, et applaudissoient ce jeune audacieux, que l'on m'a assuré se nommer Merlin de Thionville.

J'ai raconté cette anecdote à plusieurs membres du côté droit; ils m'ont assuré que le lendemain, dans une des allées du jardin des Feuillans, ce jeune

député, s'étoit vanté de son audace, et qu'il s'étoit cru le digne rival de Caton, parce qu'il avoit manqué d'égards à une princesse. Voilà quels sont les hommes qui prétendent gouverner la France. O mon frère, plaignez-moi !

LOUIS.

(TRANSLATION.)

LETTER LXIII.

To Monsieur.

July 17th, 1792.

I must relate to you, my dear brother, a most scandalous scene. I mentioned to you that certain propositions had been made me by the deputies, who often vote on the same side at the Jacobins. Those men, who cordially detest each other, who have all

the feelings of mutual distrust, and who will end by waging among themselves a war of extermination, wish, I know not why, to enlist me under their banners. Unmoved by their promises or threats, and deaf to their invitations, I have uniformly refused to second their projects. They have endeavoured to intimidate me. A deputation of the assembly was sent to me on important matters. They contrived to form the deputation of persons of exaggerated opinions, wrong-headed men, who offend against all propriety, and fancy themselves the equals of kings, and superlatively free, because they are possessed of strong lungs, are adepts in the talent of abuse, and know not how to respect misfortune.

The deputation was introduced. A certain Gensonné was the orator; he speaks well, and even with some degree of moderation. Some singular turns of phraseology, however, and indiscreet expressions disfigured

his discourse. I returned an answer, in which my heart spoke rather than my head: I forgot that I was king, and expressed my feelings without disguise.

The queen was present; and an impertinent hot-headed young man undertook a discourse, in which he reprimanded the queen. "It is you, Madam," said he, "who undo the king; it is your counsellors; you are surrounded only with royalists, and you keep the patriots at a distance!" The queen replied with dignity, and he shrugged up his shoulders. I endeavoured to appease the wrath of this indiscreet censor; but he impudently resumed the discourse, and condescended to assure me, that I was a good man, but led astray by traitors and enemies to the country. What could I answer to undeceive this man? I was silent! I addressed myself to the speaker of the deputation, but I perceived that several of the deputies present partook the delirium

of this young man, and called it courage: his name, I am told, is Merlin de Thionville.

I related this anecdote to several members of the *côté droit,* who assured me that next day, in one of the walks of the garden of the Feuillants, this young man boasted of his effrontery, and fancied himself the worthy rival of Cato, because he had been rude to a princess. Such are the men who pretend to govern France. Oh, my brother, pity me.

LEWIS.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE SIXTY-THIRD LETTER.

The deputation sent to the Tuilleries, was most probably for the purpose of influ-

encing the king in his choice of ministers; those who had been appointed on the dismission of M. Servan and his colleagues having, after a month's hard and ineffectual service, together with Dumourier, given in their resignation. It appears, that various propositions had been made the king by two parties in the assembly; one, which from his description, were the Girondists, and the other the Cordeliers, known afterwards in the convention by the name of the Mountain. Insensible to their caresses, and despising their threats, the king boasts of holding the balance of refusal equal between them, and takes offence, which was perfectly natural, at the ill organised heads of those, who think themselves the equals of kings, and free beings *par excellence*, because they have strong lungs, and the talent of saying rude things.

At the head of this deputation was "one Gensonné," who, whatever he might have

thought of the natural equality of men, had certainly no ill organised head. It appears, that the king approved his speech on the whole, notwithstanding the singular and hazarded expressions which it contained. The answer was in the true spirit of fraternity, the flow of soul rather than the emanation of wit; Lewis forgot for a time that he was a king, and gave way to his genuine feelings as a man.

The most offensive part of the story remains to be told; the queen, it seems, was present at this friendly conference, when she was addressed by Merlin de Thionville, of whose manners and appearance the king has been by no means extravagant in the description. But whatever aversion might be justly conceived against this young legislator, an aversion which his subsequent conduct but too well justified, the words which he addressed to the queen were the echo, not only of general opinion, but, un-

fortunately for the country, most substantial truths. After complimenting the queen, unused to such uncouth address, Merlin condescended to inform the king that he was a good man, *un brave homme*, but led astray by traitors and enemies of the country. This was also partly true, but spoken too rudely and too late to make any salutary impression. The conclusion which the king drew from the conversation which he afterwards held on this subject with members of the Feuillants, was not just. It was not by such rivals of Cato that the assembly meant to govern France; but the Feuillants, with whom it seems the king was in the habits of counsel, were too selfish to undeceive him, by drawing the true line of distinction between this puny personage, and those who happened accidentally to be his associates in a deputation.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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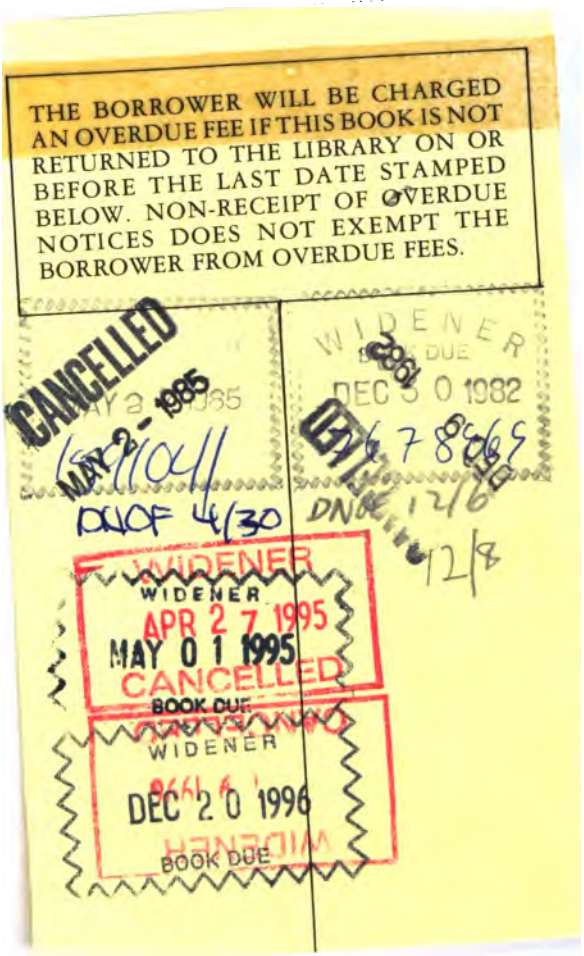
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